



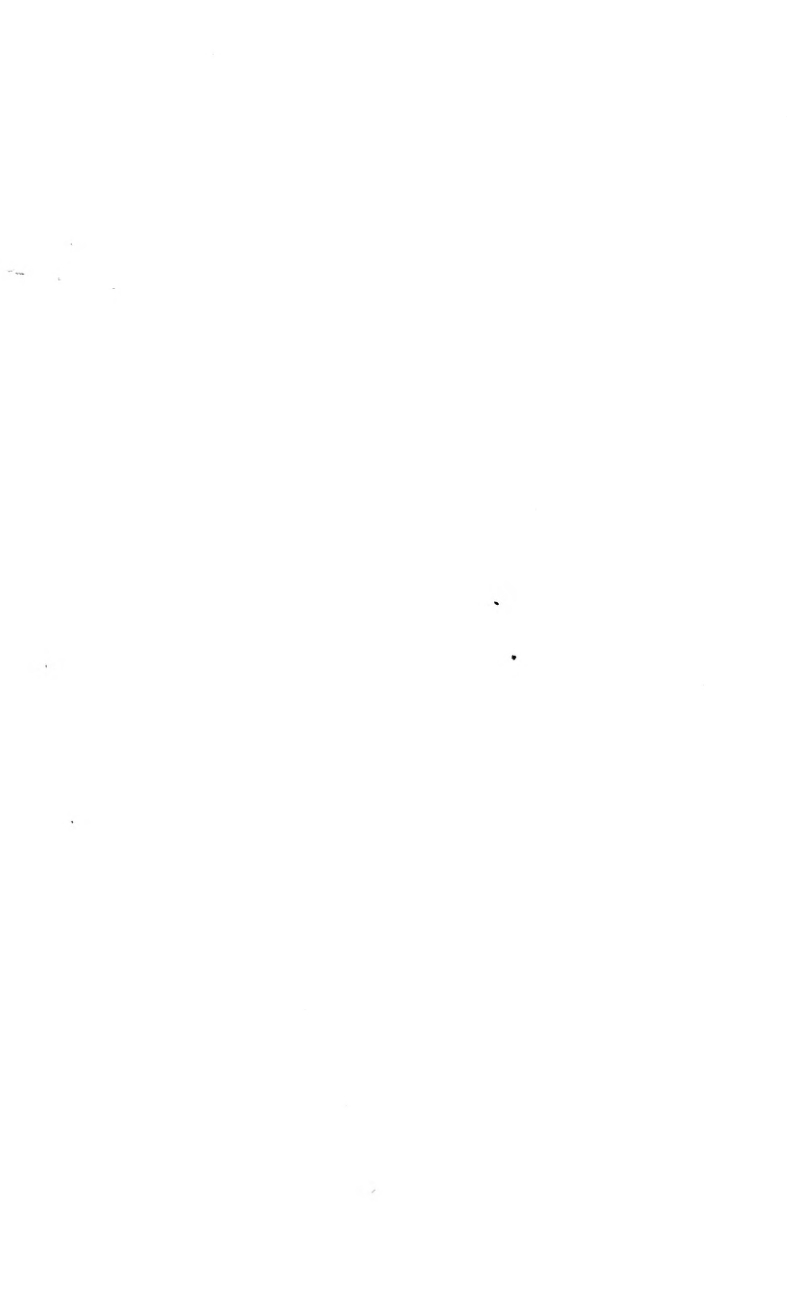


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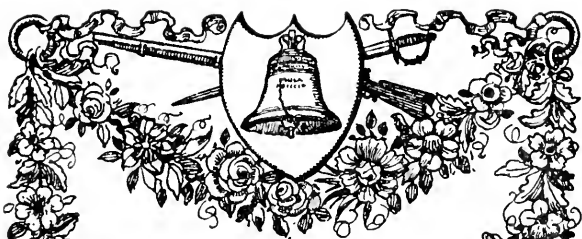
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IN BUFF AND BLUE



Being Certain Portions
from the Diary of RICH-
ARD HILTON · Gentleman
of Haset's Regiment of Del-
aware Foot in our ever
glorious War of Independence

· B Y ·

GEORGE BRYDGES RODNEY.



· B O S T O N ·

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TO

M. R. H.

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IN BUFF AND BLUE

CHAPTER I

DO you know the west bank of the Delaware, below the Schuylkill, where the Brandywine and Christiana — the old Christine-kill of the Dutch — empty into the South, now the Delaware River? The low shores and reed-beds green and golden, the long stretches of yellow sand, and above all the hiss and roar of the water, running ever onward toward the land? The long stretch of blue sky and bluer water off to the southeast where Pea-patch Island is, where the fort now stands, from which point the salt wind comes roaring in from sea, sure follower of the sunset?

If you do know the spot, there is no use in my describing it to you; if not, no words of mine can make you understand its beauties. I have heard men say that the mountains are grander, more

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beautiful, more varied in their scenery; but I have seen both, and I solemnly declare it to be my opinion that the long stretch of water now before me, with its waves running high before the wind, is no more to be compared with the tame and lifeless scenery of a ridge of earth and rocks than a living, breathing being can be compared with a statue.

They say too that the mountaineers are a hardier, sterner set than those we breed by the water. Of this I cannot speak, yet — we of the Delaware line, in the old days from '76 to '82, did not show ourselves as weak as water.

I have just been reading an old play in which occur the words: "Who fails in his life's work, let him write success, for man's judgment is not God's judgment. So may our failures be His successes;" and I am tempted to put down a few failures and a few successes I have met with in some sixty years of life, as long a sixty years of stormy life as ever a man was cursed with. But now, as the sailors say, I have "boarded my main-tack and trimmed my sheets," but notwithstanding all, I am slowly drifting on a "lee-shore" from which I cannot beat.

You do not remember, how could you, 'tis a matter of history now, the old days of '75, when Revere took his famous ride, when Mr. Henry's

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speeches rang from one end of the country to the other, till men's blood leaped like wildfire along their veins and every hand stretched out to grasp a sword-hilt. Ah, those were good old days, — days when a moment's life was worth a year's idleness and ease of the present time!

I was born here by the river, and here I have lived perhaps some sixty years as planter, soldier, lawyer, but always, thank God, a gentleman. My home was not large, — the farm of some six hundred acres, and the house, a large, square, yellow stuccoed building just above the river, while comfortable enough, was quite unpretentious, as most of our Delaware houses are. A smooth, level lawn stretched away to the east and fronted on the river, and behind the house the avenue, lined with ever-green trees, led westward to the old pike-road, our chief thoroughfare and connection with the outside world. Northeastward the spires and roofs of New Castle loomed up through the tree-tops against the background of blue water in the cove outside.

One soft June morning in '76, we were seated at breakfast on the piazza facing the bay. It was a pleasant spot in summer, almost shut in by the honeysuckle vines and morning-glories, and cooled by the light breezes always moving there.

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My father had pushed back his chair and was sitting gazing contemplatively at the long, dark line of woods some half a mile away. Dr. Haslet, who was visiting us, was busily reading his letters. For the rest of us, my two brothers were teasing the cat, and my mother and Bess were discussing in low tones some subject of mutual interest.

"I tell you, Tom," said Dr. Haslet, presently, in an excited tone that made us all look up, "it is no longer to be borne! Are we to have foreign mercenaries quartered on us, oppressive taxes and unjust laws without even a vote of our own upon our own affairs? See here!" and he handed my father a document: "'t is from the President of the Council of Safety," he said, "and is my commission as colonel of the State line. Why, we do but wait for news from Congress, and then away to the front;" and his eyes lighted up and his face flushed with excitement.

My father stroked his chin and said nothing. Presently Dr. Haslet added: "Why, look you, Tom, in your heart you know us in the right. Now admit it."

My father nodded gravely. "Yes," said he; "but war is a terrible thing."

"Of course it is," assented the other; "a very terrible thing, but it is being forced on us. Why,

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even Dick there" — pointing to me — "his very hands are itching to grasp a pommel. What do you say, Tom, will you lend him to us?"

I colored guiltily, for only the night before we had had a long talk upon this very question.

"Ah, Dr. Haslet," said my mother, quietly, "you ask a great deal: the oldest son. Do you not know that 'they that take the sword shall perish with the sword'?"

He colored hotly. "Then, madam," quoth he, "he dies a soldier's death. 'Tis better surely to die sword in hand, in defence of all that makes life worth living, than to suffer what the old Norsemen rightly called a 'cow's death.'"

"We will discuss it later over our pipes," said my father. "After all, it must rest with Dick himself. If he thinks it is his duty to go, I am not the man to stop him."

My heart almost stopped beating in my astonishment. My father, always reserved and silent, had practically given his consent, and the dream of my life was about to be realized. I had always wished for a soldier's life, but had looked rather to wearing the red coat of the British line than any other, and the mere thought of seeing war in reality was enough to set my blood racing madly through my veins.

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In those days the country was all astir. Ever since the summer of '65, when the Stamp Act was repealed, everything had been quiet, and the people rested, though impatiently, under the English rule, just as you can see the power at sea beneath the long, heavy ground-swell. Then five years later came the Act of Parliament quartering troops upon the people, and for five years more a feverish tranquillity existed. It was a dangerous silence, the lull before the storm, of which the shot fired over the bridge at Concord was the beginning.

But open war had not yet broken out. That, indeed, we hoped might be averted. Indeed, it was not until Mr. Lee read his famous resolution that—but I am running a little ahead, and so must pause and let events explain themselves.

Late in the afternoon my father, Colonel Haslet and I, were seated on the veranda, smoking and discussing the affairs of the country. To be accurate, they were talking to an interested audience of one, when my younger brother Tom rode up. He had been to the town on some errand for my mother, and had just returned. Seeing us seated before the house, he gave his horse to a servant and joined us. Noticing the evident excitement in his manner, Colonel Haslet asked him,—

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"Well, Tom, what is the news from town?"

"There is a meeting to-night," said he, "of the citizens. to discuss the prospects of the coming struggle, and to enlist men. The Council of Safety has appealed for troops."

"Will they enlist?" asked my father.

"Some will," replied Tom, "but many object. They say it is too early. I thought you would like to know of the meeting, and so rode out to tell you."

"Right," said Colonel Haslet. Then turning to my father: "At least, Tom," he went on, "you will let Dick ride with me to-morrow to Philadelphia? I'll return him safe and sound."

"Yes," said my father, "I think it will be the best plan for him to go with you, and see for himself how men's minds are being formed."

So, after supper, we all rode into town to hear the latest news, and to discover what the people thought of the all-important topic. It was easy to tell that something was afoot, for the generally sleepy old place was all astir. Before the courthouse a large crowd had gathered, listening attentively to some speaker, to me unknown. On the porch of the tavern opposite, a group of gentlemen were seated at their wine, listening, too, to the speaker just across the square. We joined them,

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for they were old friends of my father, and many were the comments of the listeners on the latest news from Congress, the Shipping Bill, and other topics then occupying public attention.

Presently a lull occurred in the talk, and for a moment no one spoke, and then a few words came over to us from the raised street before the courthouse. The speaker was nearly through, and the closing words of his speech were carried over to us on the soft summer breeze that sighed lazily in the tree-tops, and left a dark blue line upon the river seen through the long row of trees to the east.

"And so," he said, "you have to choose your path. Some few rebellious fools call 'to arms,' but the loyal men, the men of English heart, say that the king is right. But I know you men of Delaware — I know you will obey the dictates of your conscience, and take the loyal, and let me call it the prudent course, the winning side; and so I say, 'God save the King!'"

A few faint voices joined in his cheer, and I was surprised to see Dr. Haslet rise, leave us, and hurry across the street to the now vacant platform. He sprang hastily upon it, and the crowd, seeing him, for he was deservedly well known, gathered round him and waited for him to speak. For a

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moment he stood there silent, his tall athletic figure, keen face, and earnest look keeping both the eyes and attention of all men. Then he spoke.

“Men of Delaware”—the words came slowly and impressively; “citizens of my own adopted province, among whom I have lived and hope some day to die, you have just heard a speech on one side of an all-important question. I am no speaker, but will you listen attentively, — kindly, I know you will, — to a few words on the other side? Though there is much to be said, I will be very brief. Does a loving mother-country treat her children as England has treated us? Are our houses to be but barracks for a paid soldiery, and our money, in spite of our protests, pay them for oppressing us? Are we to have no voice in our own affairs? Peace is right and good, but when rights are trampled under foot and justice made a mock of, then surely it is time to rise and assert ourselves. I too know you men of Delaware! I know you far too well to think for a moment you will take the prudent course which has been recommended to you when the other lies open; the course which leads to suffering, privation, freedom, and undying honor. They have told me that you will not fight, that you are afraid

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to take your fortunes into your own hands and place them on a single turn of the wheel! Is it so?"

A roar of denial burst from the crowd beneath.

"We want men," he went on, — "men who are willing to suffer and perhaps to die. And if you will be true comrades to us, true comrades will we be to you, come what may. I cannot promise you success nor wealth, which you want not, but I can promise you a man's death and a soldier's funeral."

He stopped for a moment, and then went on: "But I do not wish to take you by surprise. Let no man enlist on the impulse of the moment. Give the matter your serious consideration, and those of you who wish to join shall have a chance to do so. And so good-night." And he sprang from the platform and rejoined his party, cheered heartily by the crowd.

After a short time spent in conversation our horses were brought and we cantered slowly homeward through the cool twilight, discussing chiefly my trip with Colonel Haslet on the morrow, which was to be the crisis of my fortune.

The next morning dawned bright and fair, a soft, happy, joyous summer day with a light mist veiling land and sea and sky like the fainter haze

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of the more gorgeous Indian summer. The river shone, a placid sheet of blue under the sunlight with never a ripple to mar its quiet, and the long, low background of the Jersey shore with its silver fringe of sand seemed faint and far away. Away down the bay one could see far-off flecks of canvas against the blue of the water; and the only sound that broke the silence was the dull, rattling roar of the halyards as the sails were hoisted on a schooner in the cove outside.

Presently, after we had breakfasted, our horses were brought round, and Dr. Haslet, already booted and spurred for his journey, reminded me that it was time to start, for we were to ride as far as Chester before dinner in order that we might avoid the heat of the day and finish our ride in the evening. A cordial handshake from my father and brothers, a kiss from my mother and Bess, and I mounted and with a hearty "Good-bye" from all we trotted leisurely down the lane and turned into the dusty pike.

And now for a moment let me pause. You of the present days of prosperity and peace can scarce know what it was that sixty years ago brought men from their quiet pursuits and sent them to the front. There is, beneath our calm exterior, a certain latent element of passion, law-

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lessness as it were, which loves to come to the front. Prick a gentleman and you find a savage. So when our men were goaded past endurance by the grievous wrongs which the stupidity of Parliament—for Chatham and Burke knew better—had brought upon us, the old vein of Saxon fighting-blood started into life and drove us all from different pursuits to spring to arms.

Some, the majority I am proud to say, went because their duty was made plain; some because the others did, from sheer love of good company; some from hopes of winning honor and preferment; but if you ask what motive led me, Richard Hilton, a boy of twenty-one, to do as did the others, I will be honest at least, and say it was primarily the desire for a soldier's life, of which I knew nothing, absolutely nothing.

As we rode quietly along the road to New Castle I had a good opportunity of observing my companion. He was above the medium height, rather heavily built, yet of a pleasing figure; a long face with rather sharp features. His eyes were quick, piercing, and deepset, and his arms unusually long. His well-fitting blue coat showed off his figure well, and from his gray wig to the little silver spurs on his well-blackened boots he was, as I knew him to be, a gentleman. His seat in the saddle

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showed to my not inexperienced eye the horseman, though he rode with what was to us an unusual seat, the long stirrup, dropped heel, and body well back, the seat of the British cavalry, whereas at home we invariably used the short stirrup and low pommel of the hunter, a good enough seat for crossing country, though not much for breaking a square.

We did not attempt to hurry our horses, for there was no need for haste, and after stopping at the tavern for a glass of ale we cantered slowly out of New Castle on the pike to Wilmington.



CHAPTER II

THE sun had fairly risen by the time we sighted the roofs and spires of Wilmington, and it was with a feeling of great relief, for the heat was intense though it was early morning, that we cantered slowly along the shaded causeway leading into the town. Our first stop was to be Chester, now some twelve miles away, and as we had no cause to draw rein, we rode steadily northward, crossed the old bridge over the Brandywine, at a future day to be the scene of a most bloody skirmish, and so on to the hills now rising in lines of hazy blue before us. The aspect of the country now had changed, and we were no longer riding between the low, flat fields, well marked with the green hedges, to which I was accustomed. Westward and northward ran the spurs of the Kittatinny Hills, woodland dark and thick, dotted here and there with specks of white, showing where the comfortable farm-houses were situated, the homes of the members of the

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Society of Friends, for this part of the country had always been their stronghold.

Our ride was a most pleasant one, made the pleasanter to me by the entertaining talk of my companion. He was born an Irishman, educated at the University of Edinburgh, where he had taken a degree in medicine; and his talk was, so to speak, served up with the sauce of Irish humor and the spice of Scottish dryness, which like the dryness of champagne, lent life and sparkle to talk engaging enough of itself.

"Dick," said he, "I have no intention of letting you go home, lad. You must strike in with us hand and heart. I know your father well, and I know, too, well enough that his coolness in the matter was mostly assumed that he might not set you an example of impulse and what you might wrongly construe as undue haste. We have already near eight hundred men enlisted, a fair fighting strength for a regiment, and I intend, in case you throw in your fortunes with us, to get you a commission as ensign in the line. In cavalry our forces will be woefully deficient, and cavalry, mark you, is to an army what eyes are to a man. Our main strength will be in our foot, and if some had their way—" He stopped and burst into a fit of laughter. I looked at him in surprise, and he

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presently, seeing my questioning look, went on:

“Gad, lad! ’tis too good to keep. Listen to this,” pulling from his pocket a letter. “’T is from Mr. Franklin, who is reputed a wise man, and who, like most wise men, can occasionally err.” Then he read the letter, or an extract from it, treating of the arming of the new levies. “‘I still wish with you,’” it read, “‘that pikes could be introduced, and I would add bows and arrows. They were good weapons not wisely laid aside. A man may shoot as truly with a bow as with a musket. Second, he can discharge four arrows as against one bullet; third, a flight of arrows seen by the enemy will disconcert them; and lastly, they are more easily provided than muskets and ammunition.’”¹

“He might add, forsooth, that cobble-stones are more easily provided than bows, and therefore ’t would be better for our men to go out armed, like David, with a sling. But here we are in sight of Chester, and for my part I am not sorry for it. A fowl or two and something to wash it down will not be amiss to me, nor to you either, I ’ll warrant.” And drawing rein before an inn, we gave our horses to a servant, and entering the house were soon

¹ See letter from Franklin to General Charles Lee, dated February 11, 1776.

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occupied in discussing an impromptu yet savory luncheon of cold meat, bread, and a couple of bottles of wine.

We were detained about an hour by Colonel Haslet's horse having cast a shoe, so that it wanted a quarter to six when our horses stepped gingerly on the platform at the Schuylkill Ferry. From there to the City Tavern was but a few minutes' steady trot, and I personally must confess to a feeling of great relief when I swung out of saddle at the inn-door and saw my mare, Miss Dainty, led slowly away by the hostler.

Eight hours of sound sleep proved a veritable Lethe, and when we left the tavern at nine by the clock, it was with the firm determination that the next day should find a letter on its way to my father, telling him of my decision to throw in my fortunes with the colonist cause.

"Dick," said Colonel Haslet, "suppose we go straight to the State House. Better draw water from the fountain-head than get it from the ditch. Doubtless we can get in there and hear the talk, and so see for ourselves how things will go."

When we reached the building everything was quiet and orderly, not presaging in the slightest degree the great excitement that was, in a few days, to reign there.

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Several days passed, days in which the hours dragged with leaden feet. So anxious were we for news that we scarcely left the State House from morning to night, not liking to be absent even for our meals, not knowing what might occur in even that short time. I think I shall never forget the 7th of June, the day of Mr. Lee's so famous resolution.

We had just left our tavern after dinner and were walking slowly down the street, when our attention was attracted by a large crowd gathered before the hall. By dint of much pushing we managed to secure a place outside the doors. Mr. Lee was just speaking, closing his celebrated speech declaring our justly merited independence. He stopped, and a solemn stillness reigned through all the building. The silence was so intense that it grew oppressive. Every nerve was strained to almost breaking tension, for we well knew that the fate of the country might depend on the next ten words uttered in debate, so easily are men's minds swayed in times of popular excitement.

Then, when the silence was no longer to be borne, one of the delegates from Virginia, Mr. Jefferson, rose in his place, and every eye turned in nervous interest upon him. He spoke briefly but tersely, and when he reached the words, "And

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therefore, gentlemen, to this cause I give my vote," a great sigh of relief rose from all present, showing where their interests were centred.

For the next two weeks we were busy with the varied duties which invariably fell to the lot of those then interested in the military affairs of the country. So crude were the general ideas of arming the troops that Mr. Franklin's letter, strange and ridiculous as it was, seemed but to indicate a popular idea. Arms were scarce and dear, and lead and powder, too, were difficult to obtain. Mr. Morris, of whom more hereafter, was invaluable to Colonel Haslet in every way, aiding him not only by hints, but in far more practical ways.

Dr. Haslet, now formally Colonel of the First Delaware Regiment, had, as he said he would, obtained me a commission in that regiment as lieutenant. My desire had always been for the cavalry, but of course I preferred serving with my own people as infantry to obtaining the desired service, but with strangers. Our affairs were nearly completed by the 2d of July.

Early on the morning of that day, came some important despatches regarding the equipping of the men, requiring Colonel Haslet's presence at Dover, so after a few words with me, telling me to report to Mr. McKean and to be sure to keep

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an eye on the condition of affairs, he left on his long ride. That day and the next passed quietly, with nothing happening to draw off the attention of the public from the all-absorbing doings of Congress.

There was little enough for me to do, for at that time I knew but few people in the city, and so when the night of the third came, bringing with it the rumors of a great debate in Congress, I was but too ready to credit anything. Late that night every one about the tavern had retired, and I was seated on the inn porch smoking. It was, as I have said, the night of the 3d of July, and everything was as quiet as the proverbial summer day. Eleven o'clock struck, and some one ran hurriedly up the steps, called the landlord, and said something in a low tone of which I caught not a single word. My imagination being thus put to work, I became restless, and finally seizing my hat walked down the street.

There was no one outside the State House, though bright lights in the windows showed that the busy heads still sat in debate inside. I pushed open the door and went in, walked up to the door of the hall, which was closed, and stood waiting for I knew not what.

For an hour or more I wandered round the

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building, and finally took refuge in the staircase near the top of the building, which led up to the cupola, where the bell was hung. The bell-ringer, a very old man, eighty years if a day, sat there on a low stool, his gray head resting on his hands; and on the step below him sat his little grandson, munching with boyish satisfaction an apple. A single candle, stuck in an old tin candlestick, threw just enough light about the place to bring the shadows into strong relief. Seeing me, the old man leaned forward. "What is it, sir? What is it?" he asked excitedly. "Shall I ring, sir? shall I ring?"

I shook my head in answer.

"Ah, no! No! They cannot do it! They dare not, dare not do it!" he muttered to himself. Then turning to the little boy beside him, —

"Tommy, do thee run down and stand by the door and tell grandfather what they say."

The little fellow nodded gravely, put his apple in his pocket, and scrambled down the ladder to the door below.

For a long time I stood there, hours it seemed. I tried to talk to the bell-ringer; but he would not talk, so I too sat and waited in silence. Through all the building a solemn stillness reigned and the play of the shadows on the floor below seemed

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most grotesque and weird. In the halls of Congress a low faint rustle of paper was heard, and once the clear strident tones of a speaker rose, swelled, and slowly died away. Suddenly the little boy came running to the foot of the ladder, his face aflush with boyish excitement.

"Grandfather! Grandfather!" he called breathlessly, "Ring! Ring!" the clear, childish treble echoing oddly through the silence.

The old man looked up questioningly. He did not seem to clearly understand, so I too took up the cry, "Ring, old man! Ring!" I shouted. "Ring as you never rang before!" and he looked up and seized the rope, and I saw the veins and muscles in his wrists stand out as he swung his weight upon it.

And then from the dusky shadows at the top of the ladder, I saw the dark form of the bell swing out against the spangled back-ground of the sky above, and there sounded then so sweet a peal that it seemed as if the symphonies of seraphs could not rival it. Just one note rang out, when the old man tottered, his grip upon the rope loosened, and he fell forward in my arms as I sprang up the ladder, seized the rope, and threw my whole strength upon it, sending peal after peal ringing out over the city through the darkness.

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The result was so instantaneous as to be almost magical. Windows were opened, lights gleamed in the open casements, doors slammed, and shouts were heard in the streets, — men cheering, women crying. Soon a vast crowd had gathered before the door of the hall. Some one had taken my place at the bell, which was sending forth note after note swelling and rising on the night wind. No need to tell them what was the news! As if by instinct it was known, and the crowd was nearly frantic with joy, firing of guns, ringing of bells, shouting and singing like mad, until the echoes came back from roof and steeple, and the great wave of sound went rolling over field and river far below, and the air was full of the cheering.

I picked up the body of the old bell-ringer and laid it reverently upon a bench, where some women took charge of it. He was dead, — dead I verily believe of happiness, if there can be such a death.

You may well believe there was but little sleep for any one that night. Congress had finally committed itself, and we, a new country, were about to be pitted in actual trial, *vi et armis*, with the strongest nation on the face of the earth. No wonder so much time was required for consideration. No wonder such deliberation was shown

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in debate. But now all this was past, and it remained for us to be up and playing our parts, at least learning them in rehearsal, for the tragedy was on, and the curtain soon to rise.

It was three o'clock when I returned to the tavern. Mr. McKean, who had returned to the inn, was up, a towel round his head, dictating letters to a clerk. Hearing me come in, he called me, and, when I entered, said without turning his head :

"Well, Dick ! They've done it, boy. I knew they would. I was sure of it, sure, and yet, by Jove, I'm most agreeably surprised ; but after Bunker Hill they could do nothing else. Could n't leave Massachusetts by herself. You know, 'a house divided against itself cannot stand.' You must start at once, boy, with these despatches to Colonel Haslet at Dover. He must bring the regiment to the front. 'Tis your first mission as a soldier, and do it quickly, Dick. 'Tis eighty miles. You should make it in fifteen hours, with the roads as they are. Better stop at home on the way back and bring your own company up. They should get here by the 6th, for they'll travel light."

Taking the papers he handed me, I saluted, and sprang down the stairs, routed out the hostler, and in ten minutes from the time I left the room, I was

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on Miss Dainty's back, cantering leisurely toward the Ferry.

On a long ride, no greater mistake can be made than by hurrying your mount. I was enough of a horseman to know this, and so let my mare pick her own gait for the first few miles. After we had cleared the city I stopped a moment, loosened the girths, eased the bridle and cast loose the curb-chain; and in a few moments we were speeding along at a long, swinging gallop that laid the miles behind us in famous fashion.

Tedious as a long ride is by daylight, it is a thousand times more so by night, when one can see nothing save the rhythmic swing of his horse's shoulders and the quick play of the eager ears, attentive to the slightest motion. So we went for hours, now mounting some hill or trotting slowly down the opposite slope, or shouldering our way steadily through the cold mists rising from the bottom lands. Eight o'clock found us south of Wilmington, and though I would have dearly liked to have stopped at home, if only for a moment, I did not dare draw rein, and so pushed steadily along the western road. Thanks to the way I had nursed my mare at the first, she was tolerably fresh, so I kept on to Kirkwood, where I got a change of mounts. Any one who has ever

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ridden against time will know the relief of that. Even Miss Dainty's even swinging step had begun to gall me, and I was very tired when I drew up that night before Colonel Haslet's headquarters at Dover, where he was recruiting, and delivered my letters.

"Why, Hilton, Hilton," said he, "welcome! welcome!" and he shook me warmly by the hand. "I suppose you know," said he, "that you are to return home and join the muster there, and meet us as we go through. Report to Baker to-morrow night. Can you do it by then?"

"Oh, yes, sir," I replied with a grimace, as I felt the inside of my legs, rubbed by the saddle.

He smiled and said, "Oh, you'll get over that;" and left me to get some rest and something to eat.

I spent the night there, and the next day set out for home, got my mare again at Kirkwood, and reached my destination about dusk. I was very anxious to get there. Perhaps, I will not say certainly, it was a boy's desire to show myself in my new uniform of blue and buff, the colors just adopted for our forces, that made me so anxious to see my family and friends. It was with very mixed sensations that I reined up at my own gate, and turned in at the old familiar lane. An hour at most was all I had at home, and then to leave,

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perhaps forever. No need surely to tell of my welcome. My letter had been received, and my father thoroughly approved of my decision. As for my mother and Bess, womanlike, they cried, and yet fairly pushed me into saddle when I said my last farewell. I did not dare to look back as I turned into the road, for a queer convulsive throbbing at the heart told me if I did I would give way to what, in my new-born pride, I deemed a weakness.

A short half hour brought me to town, and I put spurs to my horse as we turned in on the main street. It was twilight as I cantered across the open square before the court-house, and —

“Dick, Dick,” some one called from Mr. Weston’s house to my left. I turned hastily in my saddle, and looked eagerly. It was Kitty — Kitty Weston.

Fifty years seems a long time to youth. Yet those fifty years pass as a second to me, and I see again that sweet vision that Kitty presented, standing as she was, all clad in white, beneath the dark shadows of the lindens, the last rays of the fast westering sun playing riotously in the golden ripples of her hair, her eyes open wide in sweet surprise, her lips just parted in a smile of welcome.

“Why, Kitty, Kitty,” was all that I could say,

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as I swung out of saddle and raised to my lips the gracious little hands extended in so warm a welcome.

"Oh, Dick, Dick," she said breathlessly, "I am so glad to see you. I thought you had forgotten us. But what does *this* mean, Dick?" and I thought, perhaps it was but a thought, that she paled a little as her fingers touched my sword-hilt.

"It means war at last, Kitty," I replied. "We march to the front to-night; immediately, in fact. Will you not send your best wishes with us?" and I took her hands in mine. "Oh, Kitty, Kitty, I want more than your best wishes; you are all the world to me, and I love you, love you, Kitty, and I want—" But the shrill rattle of a drum before the court-house, where the men were mustering, broke in upon my pleading. "I must join my men, Kitty," I went on; "and yet I cannot without a word. Tell me, Kit, when I—that is, if I come back—"

"Yes, yes! Tell me then," she whispered softly, as with trembling fingers she deftly knotted the ribbon from her hair, about my sword-hilt. "Now go," she said. "Go, Dick! and—my love goes with you," and turning bashfully she ran up the steps, paused a second to kiss her hand to me, and then ran into the house.

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The company had formed, some ninety strong, when I joined them and took my place in the line. We were to march to Wilmington to join the companies from the lower counties, and then "to the front." Ah, what that phrase "the front" meant to us then, and what it was to mean in days to come! The roll was called, ranks called off, and breaking into column of fours the steady, rhythmic tramp, tramp, tramp of the marching feet sounded through the silent streets as the company swung into the road to Wilmington.

Then some one in the front ranks began to sing, and the words were taken up all along the line.

They ran somewhat like this : —

" Here 's to the heart
That plays its part,
Wherever duties call,
And to the blade
By valor made,
Our honor's strongest wall.

" But here 's the toast,
We drink to most,
Let him who shuns beware.
We drain our cup,
To the stern make-up
Of the Line of Delaware."

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A roar of approbation greeted this evidently impromptu attempt at a song, and the air, then a popular one, was thundered out without much regard to tune.

A long, lingering look at a little white-clad figure in a doorway, a wave of my hand and a sudden tightening at my heartstrings, and I said a mute farewell to home and Kitty, and so was fairly started on my way to the war.



CHAPTER III

AFTER we had begun our march northward, ranks were broken and the men marched at ease. At Wilmington we were joined by two companies from Kent, which had been awaiting us, and we pushed on a few miles and spent the night, or what was left of it, just north of the town, not caring to expose the newly recruited men to the temptations that the taverns were sure to offer in the town.

There is no need to tell of the rest of our march the next day; how we were joined by two companies before we broke camp and by two more at Chester, so that we mustered eight full companies when we reached the Schuylkill Ferry.

We were not a very brilliant array as we swung down High Street, now Market. The officers alone were uniformed, and some of them only partly so. As for the men, they were a motley collection of brown and gray and blue, all in

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homespun, many of them coatless, yet their manly, soldierly bearing and good discipline gave promise of a brave showing in time of need. As for their arms, I dare swear no two were alike in their accoutrements; smooth-bore pieces, fowling-pieces, cavalry carbines; but the long rifle, peculiarly an American weapon, was most numerous.

The cheers were deafening as we tramped steadily down the street to the City Tavern, in front of which we were paraded, when Colonel Haslet addressed us. Then the adjutant read off a list of citizens who had offered to provide lodgings for the men, and the billets were arranged; and so we dispersed, with orders to assemble at daybreak to march to the front to join General Lord Stirling's brigade at Brooklyn.

Two days and a half passed before we reached our destination. I need not say we hurried, for our only fear was that a battle might be fought before our arrival.

And now I am going to skip a period of a few days, a few hot days of sultry August weather. Days in which we did nothing but march and drill and march again, always on the *qui vive* by night and drilling during the day, doing that work which gained for us the name of the "picked troops" of the army.

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Our little army, under the command of General Sullivan, lay with its centre at the little village of Flatbush, the right wing thrown out along the coast-road and the left occupying the plain between the Bedford Road and Brooklyn. My own regiment, together with Miles' two battalions, Atlee's, Smallwood's Maryland regiment, Schutze's York militia, and Hechlin's Lancaster County Rifles, formed Lord Stirling's brigade, and lay well over to the right of our line.

For some time past a careful watch had been kept upon us; and, deeming this a favorable opportunity for "scotching the snake," it was decided to attack us in force.

I shall not easily forget the night of the 26th of August. It was terribly hot, the very moonlight seeming radiant heat and the horses sweating as they moved uneasily at the picket-ropes. The men, most of them without tents, were lying in groups upon the bare ground, — in our regiment over two hundred had no blankets, — the low hum of conversation showing how little they were inclined to sleep. Right next to us were the lines of Smallwood's Maryland Regiment, mustered into service eleven hundred strong, mere boys many of them, who looked on the present campaign as a pleasure-party. A few lights on the

In Buff and Blue

hills behind us showed where our superiors were busy planning for the next day's fight.

For my part I shall not attempt to deny that I could not sleep for excitement. How could I do so indeed? I, a mere boy, on the eve of my first battle! How could I help looking away at the yellow lines of moonlit radiance thrown upon the water, and wondering, as I heard the British troops being ferried across the stream, what luck would ours be upon the morrow? What earthly chance had we, eight thousand raw provincials, half drilled, ill-equipped and totally unused to war, against seventeen thousand of the best soldiers in the world, who had won a name on many a European battlefield? Surely, it was enough to cause a feeling of—I cannot call it fear—it was a semi-exultant feeling in knowing that come what might it would be a hard fight and our first.

So I felt as I lay upon the ground by the fire, and I will confess that not a small part of my thoughts went to a little white-clad figure, who not so very long ago had kissed her hand to me in mute farewell.

As I lay quietly by the fire, smoking and trying to think that we were sure to win upon the morrow, a perfect babel of voices and laughter behind me announced the arrival of a party of our officers.

In Buff and Blue

Caldwell, one of the captains, had a drum in his hands, which he set down by the blaze, while the others surrounded him in expectation.

“What’s the matter?” I asked.

“Why,” said Kirkwood, “we’re going to test our luck.”

“If that’s your luck,” said Stidham, pointing at the drum, “it’s sure to be beat,” whereat a chorus of groans arose.

“My sons,” said Caldwell, gravely, “believing in omens, I have here two game cocks which we shall proceed to fight. They are a famous breed at home, the Blue Hen breed. As they’re both the same kind, it will be a fair test. Does any one wish to bet upon his choice?” So saying, he cut the head from the drum and took from it two cocks, handing one to Stidham and keeping one himself. A little space of ground, lighted by the fire, was chosen, and we gathered about it, a deep ring of men collecting behind us, for in those days cock-fighting was a favorite amusement. The betting was light, for all our possessions were on our backs and we could ill spare them.

Then they set to work and pitched the birds into the centre of the ring. For a few minutes they circled about each other, watching for an opening; then the larger of them — Stidham called

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him Cornwallis — ran in under the other bird, lifting him, rolled over on his back and struck upward as he fell, a most peculiar stroke. But General Washington was not to be taken unawares, and sprang straight up in the air, and coming down on his antagonist dealt him a blow on the breast that knocked him off his feet, and was in turn driven back to the edge of the ring, fighting at every step. Stidham caught it up, just as Cornwallis was about to put in a final blow.

“No, you don’t! you big ugly devil,” said he. “The little ‘un’s showed pluck, and you sha’n’t maul him. I now declare this meeting adjourned,” said he, putting the bird inside his coat. “Come along, Caldwell,” he added, rising.

Caldwell got up too: “You see, my sons, we ’ll be saved to-morrow, ‘as a brand from the burning,’ so take heart all of you. And now, my Blue Hen’s Chickens, get to roost every mother’s son of you, for by my word you ’ll need both wings and spurs to-morrow;” and the two strode off to their own fire. But Caldwell’s name has stuck to us, and “Blue Hen’s Chickens” we shall be until the end of the chapter.

Day broke at last, and I was roused by a kick from Baker, my captain.

“Why, Hilton! Dick! Wake up, man! Get up!

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The ball is opening;" and he unceremoniously kicked me in the ribs a second time.

I rolled over and sprang to my feet. Sure enough, the men were falling in, and when I looked across the stubble-fields I could see the long red lines of the enemy, and the little puffs of smoke from their skirmish-line as they drove in our videttes.

No time for dreaming now, and I hastily buckled on my sword, and joined my company at the left of our line. We were on the right flank of our corps, General Sullivan himself commanding the centre and Colonel Miles the left. To the rear, slightly above us, Captain Carpenter's six guns were planted: and one could plainly see Carpenter himself on his great black horse, sitting square and silent, eying the advancing lines of the enemy as his guns thundered out their bulldog welcome.

Our line was formed near the Red Lion Tavern, and about what is now known as Greenwood Cemetery. We had been reinforced by Kichline's rifle corps shortly after daybreak.

In a few minutes, hours it seemed, De Heister and Grant moved forward to attack us in force. Nearer and nearer came Grant's men, till they got within two hundred yards of us; and in the lines of the Maryland regiment I saw the men lay their

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long rifles on the fence in front ; then came a long succession of spiteful cracks, like the spit of an angry cat, and along the British lines men threw up their hands and fell headlong or staggered out of the ranks wounded, rows and rows of them.

Closer they came, but more slowly; and as Grant's two regiments wheeled aside to attack Sullivan I caught my first view of the Hessians, their long blue double-breasted coats, black gaiters, and enormous brass-fronted caps showing bravely in the sunlight. Then I remember indistinctly some one riding up and saying something to Major McDonough, — Colonel Haslet was sitting on a court martial that day in New York, — who bowed and said quickly, "Of course, sir ;" then —

"Fix bayonets," he ordered, and under other circumstances it would have been amusing to note the expression on the faces about me, some flushed, some pale as death.

I do not remember much of what followed. I fought in that charge next to the colors, shoulder to shoulder with Ellicott, a gallant captain of Smallwood's Regiment, and the only thing I clearly remember is seeing him grasp the flag as the bearer fell and promptly throw it with all his strength right in the heart of the Hessian regiment, whose

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lines broke like ropes of sand as we swept wildly down upon them with a perfect gust of oaths, bent on the recovery of our flag.

A few minutes' quick work with the cold steel, and the long blue coats and black gaiters were hurrying to the rear as fast as they could, like a covey of partridges kicked up on a windy day. It was done so quickly that it was almost laughable. All about me, our men were grinning with amusement.

My attention was drawn to one tall fellow of Atlee's Pennsylvania regiment. He had his rifle resting on the fence, and was busy picking the mud from his lock, for by this time it was raining pretty hard. I rode up to him.

"Why are you not with your command yonder, sir," I asked; "are you hurt?"

An inarticulate grunt was his reply as he looked at me and then quietly resumed his work.

"What's the matter with you," I repeated sharply; "are you wounded?"

"No," he growled. "Look a-here, will ye! I come out here to fight 'cause Maria, she's my wife, said come, and it's a durned sight better to fight them devils yonder than to stay home and fight, 'cause they don't holler when ye beat 'em. And now look at me! Look at me!" holding out his

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hands. "Ain't I a nice-looking object? Oh, go ahead an' laugh, damn ye, laugh! I come 'cause I loved my country, — that 's what the other fools said, — but I'll tell you one thing, Mister," in a burst of confidence, "I'll be damned if ever I love another country," and he eyed me angrily as I rode off laughing.

Now came the most unfortunate part of the whole day's affair. While Grant and De Heister fronted us, Howe, Clinton, Percy, and Cornwallis with ten thousand men and several batteries of artillery moved east toward Jamaica Pass, which Putnam was left to guard. But Putnam was confident that the whole force would fall on Sullivan and Stirling, and sent out no pickets.

By what I have always considered the special grace of God, a troop of unattached cavalry was up on the Bedford Road, and heard the roar of the musketry fire two miles south of them. Then came the flash of Cornwallis' bayonets in the Jamaica Pass, which Putnam's carelessness had left open. Presently the British guns got into position, and the deep, heavy roar throbbed away over land and sea.

Sullivan heard the roar but did not know the meaning of it. Stirling too was at a loss. But Grant heard it and knew too its meaning, and with

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four thousand men came straight for us, with but fifteen hundred men to oppose him.

They were too much for us, and we retreated slowly toward the creek. The fight went on in the woods and fields and up above us past Cortelyou's house. Cornwallis threw some men into the house, and Smallwood's Regiment supporting ours, retreated slowly through the woods to the old bridge across the creek. Suddenly there was a rattling roar to our left, and two regiments, one of the British line regiments and one of Hessians, confronted us.

"Close up, men!" shouted Stirling, and our regiments, alone now, with no supports, swung forward to attack four times our number. A heavy fog covered everything by this time, and I could mark the banging roar of the British muskets and see the dull flashes of our rifles through the fog, telling that the front ranks were engaged.

Ellicott was next me, and he suddenly gripped my arm. "What is it?" I asked.

"Look!" said he, "let's get those colors," and he pointed to the Hessian flag, now some yards in advance of the regiment, and together we made a rush for them.

A young fellow, in the red coat of a British officer, saw us and sprang forward also, firing his

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pistol full in my face as he did so. The bullet merely cut my cheek, like a hot iron, in its flight; but the pain maddened me, and I closed with him, furious with the smart of the wound.

With a dull gride the blades met. A half-dozen quick lunges, parries, and short, furious half-arm stabs and he cut straight at my head. Involuntarily I swung aside, thrusting straight for him as I did so. As God is my judge I did not mean to hurt him. I did not have an evil intention. He was the better swordsman of the two and he knew it, and so took chances he otherwise would not. As it was, it was my life or his, though I must say I could have wished it otherwise as I looked at the spot of blood just below his neck from which I drew my sword-point.

I had no time now for such feelings, for with a long cheer they charged us and then fell back, decimated by the withering fire from our rifles. Again and again did they charge us, and as often did we repulse them. But we could not stand it long; the Maryland regiment had suffered terribly, losing over two hundred and fifty men, and our own loss was great.

Then came one last charge of the British line. The 17th, I think it was, had pushed up to within a few yards of our position. We had but

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few bayonets, and in the pauses between the volleys one could hear plainly the sharp whir of the steel ramrods down the rifle-barrels and the tap, tap, tap, as the bullets were pushed home. We repulsed that charge as we had the others; but we were cut off from our supports, and saw — utterly beyond our power to help, for we were surrounded — General Stirling give up his sword.

We covered the retreat that night, and what was left of our shattered army got safely within the intrenchments.

The fog fortunately held over all day on the 28th, and thanks to the untiring efforts of the Marble-head men, who were born sailors, our defeated army was ferried across in safety to the mainland.

We had scarcely seated ourselves at the fire, which smouldered low and smokily in the gray fog of the early dawn, and begun preparing our scanty meal, the first in twenty-four hours, than the hurried tramp of boots squelching through the mud was heard, and Major McDonough hurried up to the fire.

“Which of you boys is the best mounted?” he asked hurriedly.

Forsythe pointed to me. “I guess Hilton is,” said he. “Here’s what’s left of my horse,” and

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he pointed to a lump of half-roasted meat stuck on a ramrod before the blaze.

A roar of laughter greeted this remark, and Major McDonough went on: "Well, Hilton, you must take these despatches at once to Congress. Lose no time, boy. They are important. 'Tis fortunate there's a horse left in all the forces. Can you tell me where I can find Ellicott of the Maryland line?"

"Right here, sir," said my friend, smiling.

"Good, sir! General Washington's orders are that you go at once to Philadelphia to bring up two companies of recruits just arrived there. Hurry, you two. Here's a flask of brandy and some biscuit I just stole from Baker for you. Good-bye and good luck;" and the gallant fellow turned and strode back through the fog.

I sent a man to bring our horses, and we immediately mounted and trotted off to a ringing accompaniment of —

"Mind your eye, Hilton, Ellicott 'l get you into trouble, sure, with the first woman you meet."

"Look out, Ellicott, that nose of yours 'll be excuse enough for the Provost Marshal." And a universal cry of —

"Get us something to drink."

"These fellows are all of them as dry as a lime-

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kiln. They 'd drink the Styx dry if they had rum to mix with it," said Ellicott, growling at his horse as it stumbled. "Listen, will you? I'll be hanged if they 're not singing." And sure enough there came floating down to us a deep-voiced chorus, Forsythe leading.

And at the conclusion of a highly moral lyric, which Forsythe himself had written on the back of an old brandy label, we turned our horses' heads, and breasting the long hill rode steadily southwestward toward Philadelphia.



CHAPTER IV

AND now occurred one of the dreariest periods I have ever known, our retreat from Long Island, followed by the battles of Harlem and White Plains, — the last a glorious victory for us in its effects, which, in turn, was succeeded by retreat after retreat until the *morale* of the army was beginning to be seriously affected. The test of a thoroughly well-drilled soldier is the rapidity with which he recovers from his reverses, and by this test we were falling more and more behind.

Our reverses had almost disheartened us, and we could not forget that Long Island was lost, not because of mere superiority in forces, but by a display of carelessness on our part which should put a very child to shame. I refer to the careful guarding of the Gowan's Creek road and the Pike, the two side doors to our position, and leaving open Jamaica Pass, through which Cornwallis came upon our rear, and, but for the gallant stand of the

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Maryland and Delaware troops, who were exposed for five hours to the fire of three brigades of the enemy, would have turned the battle to a veritable slaughter.

Week after week crept slowly by, until winter was fairly upon us. No matter how comfortable a camp may be, a winter is terribly severe on the men; and this was no exception to the rule, though not to be compared with the subsequent one we spent at Valley Forge.

Lower and lower did our spirits fall, and frequent murmurings were heard among the men, they saying that they had not enlisted to freeze but to fight, and if they could not do that, they would go home till spring came.

At last it was evident that something must be done, so on the 23d of December a council of war was held, and it was decided to cross the river and attack the British and Hessians then occupying Trenton.

Christmas day was dark and foggy, with frequent dashes of rain and snow, and we found it most depressing as we waited, half frozen, for night to fall, to cover our forlorn hope; and not one of us could conceal even from himself how forlorn it was. Darkness came at last, and with it the snow again, and one could hear indistinctly

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the roll of the muffled oars on the thwarts as the boats came up, each for its freight of men or guns or horses, and then vanished in the driving storm.

Our attacking force numbered but twenty-five hundred men, but the surprise of the attack would, it was hoped, far more than equalize the discrepancy in forces.

Cornwallis, it was discovered, had made a serious mistake in his endeavor to patrol as much of the country as was possible, for he had scattered his troops over too great an area. Colonel Rall with seventeen hundred men lay at Trenton. General Count Donop held Bordentown, about ten miles farther down the river, and other parties occupied Burlington and Mount Holly, while the depot of stores was at New Brunswick.

General Washington's plans were laid accordingly: Cadwallader at Bristol was to cross and attack Donop, to prevent his assisting Rall, while with Greene, Sullivan, and Knox, General Washington himself would cross at McConkey's Ferry, divide the force there, and march on Trenton in two divisions, one by the river road, the other by way of the town of Pennington.

The wind was blowing furiously when we embarked, and the air was full of snow, so that we

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could scarcely see to keep the boats clear of the ice ; and every few minutes the rowers were compelled to stop, to beat their ungloved hands into sensibility.

The boats too were nothing but great flat-boats used mainly to haul grain and produce, and were for the most part leaky. In our craft, the water was ankle-deep during the entire crossing, and we were kept vigorously at work, to keep it from freezing. There was little temptation to talk, — it was too cold ; so we sat quiet, save for an occasional oath, those who had cloaks muffling themselves to the chin, though these were few. Then, too, many lost their way in the storm and would drift down the river, shouting as they went, to get their bearings from the boats above. It was a question in my mind whether on landing we should muster even a full regiment.

It was terribly cold — that crossing ! All around me the men were groaning and pounding their bare hands and feet, or punching each other to restore circulation. Their suffering was fearful. For myself I was next Forsythe, who in some way, known only to himself, had obtained a bottle of brandy, which passed about the little group of our messmates as quickly as it could change hands.

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It took us several hours to cross, and my watch showed four o'clock when the last gun had been hauled ashore and the men were forming for the march.

That seven-mile march through the snow will always be a nightmare to me. The men, many of them coatless, nearly all without gloves, many barefooted, it seems incredible, but it is as true as Gospel, and the air so cold that the steel of the rifles actually burned the hands. Yet never a word did I hear of complaint as I struggled along ahead of my platoon. On the contrary, the men were doing their best to keep up one another's spirits with talk about how they would enjoy the Hessians' tents and fires when they had driven them, — one Hollis, a sergeant, swearing that he had at first only wanted a pair of shoes, but since he had to cross the river to get them he would have at least a general's outfit.

So we pressed on with Sullivan down the river-road, the snow in many places red from the naked feet of the passing troops, when word was suddenly passed for "Silence," and then "Halt;" and we saw stretching away before us the lights of Trenton, while bells and an occasional gun showed that the enemy were intent rather in their Christmas festivities than preparing for an attack.

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For the life of me I could not help contrasting this with other Christmases, notably the last one. One sweet, clear-toned bell, wonderfully like our own church bell at home, came, a flood of soft melody, across the frozen snow; and involuntarily my fancy strayed to that last Christmas: how that very night, just a year ago, we had all dined together; and how, before the ladies left us to our wine, a great bowl of smoking punch was brought; and how we all stood and with steaming glasses in our hands drank, "The King, God bless him!" shivering our glasses to the toasts; and how I stood with Kitty at the open window on Christmas eve and listened to the singing (for at home we kept our Christmas as our fathers used in England), and the ringing of the bells, and the deep, throbbing roar from the water, as the guns aboard a man-of-war at anchor off the town boomed out their jubilant reply; and how beneath the shadow in the deep embrasure of the window, I told her something, no matter what, and all unrebuked had kissed her little hand; and how — "Forward! Left into line! Close up," whispered Baker, as he gripped my arm; and coming back from Dreamland I quickly formed our line, pushing well along to the right and loosening my coat to give free play to my sword arm. "Follow the line ahead of

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you," said a deep voice to Baker, "till you reach the level, then deploy into battle line and charge. Keep your men together, sir. Now!" And again we plodded on through the fast deepening snow to within two hundred yards of their position.

What a wild whirl that charge was! Friend or foe could scarcely be distinguished in the blinding snow-whirl, and our fire was scattered and slow in its delivery. Our pace too was impeded by the snow, knee deep now, so that the Hessians had time to form to receive our attack. And then we met them, a line of spectral figures in the storm, and we drove them as men drive sheep, while Knox's guns were thundering away a merry enough peal for even a Christmas morning.

The deep thunder of the artillery awoke every soul in Trenton, and five minutes later a long crack and rattle told us that Washington was there too. The Hessian and British officers, now roused from their pleasantries, fought bravely, but too late for any good. A few minutes after the opening of the fight, Colonel Rall fell, mortally wounded, and Sullivan had seized the Assunpink bridge, so that the Hessians could not retreat. They brought two guns forward and swung them into position; but before they could be fired, a company of Colonel Mercer's Virginians stormed

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forward and took them. The British cavalry, bewildered and confused, made a rush for the Princeton road, but were met by Colonel Hand's riflemen, who drove them back with heavy loss, and seeing that all was lost they surrendered.

But twenty minutes' work, and six guns, sixteen hundred blankets, a thousand prisoners, a thousand muskets, and a great quantity of supplies to show for it! Was it any wonder that we now began to think nothing was impossible to combined bravery and prudence?

As any delay of ours on the Jersey shore was unsafe, if not dangerous in the extreme, back we went to our boats, to be referried once more to the Pennsylvania side of the river.

The news of our success filled the people—the Whig part I mean—with almost delirious joy, and Congress, then in session at Baltimore, made Washington practically Dictator for six months, with powers to raise and muster into service sixteen battalions of infantry and three thousand cavalry. But it was one thing to authorize it and another to do it. The men could not be paid! Then it was that Mr. Morris, the John Law of America, came to our assistance. The exertions of that great-hearted gentleman were incredible. I know beyond a doubt that he gave his personal note for

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fifty thousand dollars, which was used to pay the men, for General Washington had offered every man a bounty of ten dollars for six weeks longer service.

Several days passed, and then it was decided to cross the river a second time and have another go at the enemy. Cornwallis had gone to New York, but hearing of the battle at Trenton, he came in haste to Newark, and so on to New Brunswick and Princeton, collecting his forces, as he came, for a decisive battle with Washington.

It was on the 2d of January when we were ferried, for the third time in ten days, across the Delaware, and old McConkey's face began to be quite familiar to me. Our force numbered about five thousand men, half of them raw militia. Cornwallis lay at Princeton with eleven thousand, and hearing of our approach started for Trenton by way of Worth's Mill, left General Leslie there with three thousand infantry, and pushed ahead with the remainder.

Word being brought on the third of Cornwallis's approach, Fermoy and Stevens, with six guns, Hand's Rifles, and a regiment of Virginians, were despatched to hold him in check. About five miles out the British skirmish line appeared, but fell back hastily on the main body and advanced on

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Fermoy, who retreated behind a little creek, where he took position; and Cornwallis, supposing the whole army was before him, formed his battle-line and threw his troops forward, opening with all his artillery.

We were attached to General Mercer's brigade, and had taken position in the fields near Mr. Worth's mill, where the King's Highway crossed Stony Brook, and it was there we encountered the British advance guard, consisting of the 17th, 40th, and 55th Regiments, under Colonel Mawhood. Orders came to us to hold the bridge across Stony Brook, and accordingly we prepared to do so.

The 17th Regiment, the same that we encountered at Long Island, had crossed the bridge and were nearly out of sight when we reached it; but seeing our column file into the field above it, they faced about and came for us at the double quick, wheeling to the left to gain a hill near Mr. Clark's residence. As they got in range we opened fire on them, and their loss was very heavy, so heavy that with a hurrah they charged us. We had but few bayonets, and the pitiful remnant of our once splendid regiment formed up two deep now to await the onset. Then the two companies to our left — they were Philadelphia companies — broken

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by the heavy cross-fire, were driven with a rush, and General Mercer's horse was shot, just as I heard a cool voice behind me say, "Damn me I hate to do it! Close up, men, and charge! charge!" and our colonel, Colonel Haslet himself, ran forward, his coat off, bleeding from a wound in the neck, and led us with a rush right down the hill into the ranks of the 17th Regiment. I cannot describe that charge. I only remember dropping my sword and using a bayonet as well as I could. Baker was down and Wilson too, and what was my horror to see Colonel Haslet stagger and drop. He was up again in a moment, shifting his sword to his left hand. "Hurt, sir?" I asked anxiously, as I ran up to him.

"No," said he. "Close up your men, Hilton, and make—" Another volley, another stagger, and he fell in my arms, shot through the face, stone dead.

Even now, after the lapse of so many years, I cannot analyze my feelings as I stood there. I did not dare call any one to help me. God alone knows what the men would have done had they known of it. And so, for a minute I stood and looked. The courteous gentleman, the gallant soldier, the zealous patriot was gone. Well, at least it was a man's death, and the one of all others he would have chosen, as I heard him say

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that bright June day at home : " A soldier's death, sword in hand, at the head of his men." But it was bitter for us, most bitter; and half feeling I was in a dream, I laid my coat reverently over him and laid his body on an artillery limber in the rear and hurried back to the front.

Mawhood drove us and pushed on in pursuit, only to find himself in the face of our whole army, and, flushed with success, charged it. Colonel Hitchcock's Rhode Island men came up, and with their line I went on. We were well down upon them in that last charge when something struck me in the chest, something that sounded like a breaking stick; and I stumbled forward and fell upon my hands and knees, a choking sensation and the bloody froth oozing from my lips telling me that I was shot through the lungs. I must have fainted from loss of blood, for there was no pain, and the last thing I remember was vainly struggling to my feet to keep my place in the line; but I stumbled forward again and fell face downward in the snow, and then it was I fainted, — at least, all turned dark. I thought at the time it was death.

How long I lay there I have no idea. My first sensation was that of being shaken; then I was pulled out of the snow and laid upon a blanket.

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"Here's one," said a voice, and a brandy-flask was held to my lips; but I was too weak to drink, and motioned it away.

"Through the lungs," went on the voice; "bad job too. Just turn him over, Tom, and let me look. Humph! Clear through, that's better! Take him to the hospital sergeant. Gods, but those half-starved devils can fight!" and he turned away, saying, "I'll see him later;" and I was picked up and laid in a blanket, and straightway fainted again, which was probably as well.

It was broad day when I awoke. I was on a low cot in a long barn, warmed by two immense open fires, one at each end of the building. Some sixty other patients lay around me, mostly our own men, for our fire had been much more deadly than the British, and their loss was mostly in killed and missing, no wounded, or but few.

Several weeks passed, as slowly and as uneventfully as time always passes to one who is ill. I had heard much of the hardships our men were forced to undergo as prisoners of war, but I am bound, in justice to our enemies, to say that never did I meet kinder treatment. Not once did I hear the remotest reference to the fact that I was a prisoner, and the officers' mess was most kind, sending me many little delicacies which materially

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aided my recovery. As it was, I had been in the hospital for nearly five weeks, when one day Mr. Brooke, the surgeon, came in to me and said :

“ Mr. Hilton, Sir William Erskine’s compliments. He wishes you, if able, to call on him in his quarters.”

I arose and struggled into my well-bedraggled uniform, and with some assistance from the kind-hearted doctor, managed to get across to the quarters of the general commanding. A single sentry at the door barred my passage, but lowered his musket at a word from my companion, and we entered the room.

Several officers who were seated about the room looked up at my entrance, and then, as though to prevent any embarrassment on my part, quietly resumed their chat. At a large deal table in the centre of the room, his back to the fireplace, was seated a small gray-whiskered officer in a general’s uniform.

“ Mr. Hilton ? ” said he to me, inquiringly.

I bowed.

“ Of the rebel forces ? ”

“ Of the Delaware Regiment of the Continental Army,” I replied, half smiling.

“ What forces have you ? ” he asked shortly.

I put my hands in my pockets and laughed,

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which seemed to anger him a little, for he repeated the question.

"Of course, sir," said I, "you do not expect me to tell you."

"What forces have you?" he asked a third time.

"Well," said I, slowly, "at last reports, though many were sick, there were not over —" I paused, and he craned his neck forward eagerly.

"How many?" he asked quickly.

"Sixty thousand infantry, and seven thousand horse," said I, slowly.

He snorted indignantly, then to my surprise burst into a hearty laugh.

"Mr. Hilton," said he, "I of course did not expect to gain such valuable information from you, and must apologize for asking you such questions. I was bound to do so in the discharge of my duty. If you will give me your parole not to serve until exchanged, since I am informed your wound is still dangerous, I will take pleasure in permitting you to return home."

I readily gave my parole, and was immediately informed that I was free to go when I pleased. "But," said Craig, a tall infantry captain, "you must dine with us to-night. Though we are enemies in the field, we can crack a friendly bottle in camp, I hope."

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"But my wound," said I, smiling.

"Oh, we 'll fix that," put in Brooke. "We 'll be easy on you," he went on with a grin. "And now you go and sleep until dinner-time, and I 'll warrant you in good shape for your ride to-morrow."

The officers' mess was in the lower part of a large stone building, originally a barn. An enormous wood-fire burned at one end of it in an improvised fireplace, and the bareness of the walls was well hidden beneath cavalry guidons, cuirassier helmets, crossed sabres, and *aiguillettes*, while above the fireplace, below a red St. George's Cross, hung a flag I had often seen in battle, the Pine Tree Flag of the New England forces.

"We got that at White Plains," said Ferris, a short dark fellow, in the undress uniform of the Guards. "And the devil of a time we had to get it, too. But here they come," and he introduced me to a large party of officers who were crowding into the room like so many school-boys. I did not catch many of the names; but there was an absolute lack of formality between us, and though at first I was rather ashamed of my stained and tattered uniform in the midst of such a display of scarlet and blue and gold, as soon as we were seated at the table such feelings left me.

Presently the president of the mess filled his

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glass, and looking around the table, stood up and said, —

“ You can drink it, Hilton, I suppose, can't you? ‘ The King, God bless him!’ ” and he looked at me inquiringly.

“ 'T is a toast I have often drunk,” said I, “ and often will again.” And I raised my glass on high, as did the others, the old building fairly shaking beneath the thunder of their cheers. Then we settled down to the more serious business of the evening; more serious I say, and yet if there ever was an utter lack of seriousness it was there where jest and song and story fairly flew about the board.

The evening passed all too quickly, and it was with something very like regret that I filled my glass for the last toast, “ Wives and Sweethearts; ” and involuntarily my thoughts flew to the little town upon the Delaware, where I well knew that anxious hearts waited for news of me, — my mother and Bess; and above all, and all in all, was Kitty.

Then the party broke up, and amid a perfect babel of songs and shouts and laughter I found my way to my quarters, where I was to spend my last night. My dreams that night were an odd *mélange* of our last battle, Colonel Haslet, Forsythe, and my mare, Miss Dainty, who appeared

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to me in an odd form, half human, half horse, oddly grotesque yet strangely familiar.

I must have lept for nearly seven hours, when I awoke with a start, to find Ferris leaning over me and laughing.

"Wake up, man, wake up," said he, "and stop muttering about Miss Dainty. Who is she? Your sister, of course," with a grin.

"No, my horse," said I, laughing.

He shouted with laughter. "Well," said he, "that's the first time I ever heard of any one kissing a horse's hand. I've a horse for you, and I'll ride with you past our lines. Get up, man, and don't sit there like the Sphinx with never a gleam of intelligence upon your face."

I sprang to my feet and made a hasty toilet, and after an equally hasty breakfast bid a warm farewell to my new-found friends, and mounting my horse trotted slowly with Ferris through the British lines. We drew up at the last out-post and stopped.

"And now," said he, "I must say farewell." Then humorously, "We've enjoyed your visit immensely, Hilton, only the next time you bring your friends to call, let us know in time and stay longer. Our welcome will be warmer then. I know you stayed longer than you intended, but I agree with

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Homer 'tis a good rule to 'welcome the coming, and speed the parting guest.' And now, good-bye! *Vale et vade!*" and he warmly shook me by the hand, and turning his horse's head rode slowly away, while I, turning my horse in the opposite direction, trotted leisurely on my road to Philadelphia and my home.



CHAPTER V

THE morning was very cold even for a February morning, and the wind off the river was extremely penetrating. A light snowfall of the night before covered the ground, and as I was still quite weak from my wound, finding the road extremely rough, I could travel but slowly. Altogether I was nearly four days in traversing some seventy miles, owing to the bad roads, flooded streams, and my late illness. Then, too, I was in no especial hurry, for being unable to take part in the campaign until exchanged, an indefinite time, I determined to visit Philadelphia, see my friends there, and so travel home by easy stages, using what influence I could command, to effect my exchange and then rejoin my regiment.

I remember well enough it was the 20th of February when I drew up before the Tavern, then the resort of all the gentlemen of note. I stopped

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there, as I wished to find some old friends, if any were to be found, well knowing they would be there if anywhere. My bandaged shoulder, my uniform, and above all, the British cavalry equipments on my horse, attracted general attention, and a little group of idlers soon gathered round me. Neither desiring nor coveting this distinction, I flung my reins to an hostler, swung out of saddle, and strode quickly up the steps, almost running into a gentleman who was at that moment leaving the inn. A hearty slap on my good shoulder made me turn.

"Why, Hilton! Hilton! Dick Hilton, as I'm a sinful saint," said a laughing voice. "By Jove, I'm glad to see you, boy. We all thought you'd 'gone to swell the realms of glory.'"

At his very first words I turned and, in turning, recognized him. It was Tom Forsythe, my old friend, — Forsythe, the best-hearted, kindest fellow who ever wore a sword-belt.

In a few words I told him of my wound, my recovery, and that I was on parole.

"Oh!" said he, "we'll fix that. Come along, and we'll see McKean and Read. There's lots of English officers taken, and it's odd if a lieutenant is so important that he can't be exchanged, particularly if old Hall gets after 'em. We'll see him

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first. Come on." And we walked leisurely down the street, to a bowling alley much frequented then by the gentlemen of the city.

There were many officers in the room when we entered, and we had rather a difficulty in threading our way to the alley, where I caught sight of Colonel Hall. He greeted me warmly, and hearing of my predicament said : —

"Why, it has not been two weeks since Colonel Bedford sent an English officer who was on the sick-list to New Castle. He was taken prisoner at White Plains and has been sick since then. Bedford took quite a fancy to him and sent him home with a letter, and he is now slowly recovering there. No doubt we can arrange to exchange him in your place. But I am just about to call on Mr. Morris, Robert Morris, you know, on some business, and if you would like to make his acquaintance come along with me. It will be pleasant for you, and possibly it may be of some profit;" and he passed his hand through my arm as we walked slowly out of the building.

"I suppose," said Forsythe, slowly, as we went up the street, "that I ought to be very sorry you have come back, Dick," and he looked at me quizzically.

"Why?" I asked wonderingly.

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“Like Richard I say, ‘My kingdom for a horse,’ and now your return will rob me of the best I ever threw leg over. I mean your mare, Miss Dainty,” he went on, in answer to my look of surprise. “When I found you were left behind as we all thought killed, I took your mare, and I have her safe and sound at the Tavern stable.”

I thanked him cordially for taking care of the mare, for I had often thought of her, and her supposed loss had been a great blow to me. And so with many a joke and laugh from my friends we walked up to Mr. Morris’s house. It was not at all an imposing building,—quite the reverse: a plain, square brick house with white marble steps and wooden semi-columns painted white beside the door, near which a sprawling rose-tree spread its branches over the brick walls.

Colonel Hall rapped noisily at the knocker, which was, I remember, a large brass elephant’s head, the movable trunk being the knocker, and the door was presently opened by an old negro.

The question, “Is your master in?” was answered by a silent bow, and the opening of the right hand door leading into the square hall in which we were standing. The room into which we were ushered, though doubtless no larger than those at home, seemed almost princely in its dimensions. A very

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high narrow mantel-shelf of woodwork, painted white and ornamented in bas-relief with garlands and wreaths and several dancing figures, stood over a cavernous open fireplace, occupying the side of the room farthest from the street. Two long dark sets of book-shelves, glazed with small diamond-shaped panes, caught an occasional gleam from the smouldering fire and threw it back upon the window panes.

Near the window, arranging a pile of papers by the fast fading daylight, an elderly gentleman was seated at a desk. He was, I should say, about fifty years of age, and stout, yet his bulk suggested largeness rather than fatness. His color was high, looking very ruddy in contrast with his white hair, all his own, which he wore done in a plain queue tied with a black ribbon. His mouth was very pleasant, and I thought humorous, all the more so perhaps because of an immense double chin.

All this I took in, in a second as it were, for at the bustle of our entrance, he rose and looked expectantly toward the door.

"Ah, Colonel Hall, is it thee?" said he, in a pleasant voice, as he shook hands. "And who are the friends with thee?" he asked.

"Mr. Forsythe and Mr. Hilton of our State line," was the reply. "I wished to ask you, sir, if

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you would use your influence to get Mr. Hilton exchanged. He is at present on parole."

"Ah! On parole? Thee must tell me all about it;" and he dragged some chairs before the fire, and taking his place before us with his back to the glow he listened interestedly to my story of the two battles, which I made as brief as was possible.

When I had finished he drew a long breath. "Thee has had a most narrow escape, my boy, for which I trust thee gives God thanks. Truly, Colonel Hall, thy State line had made a name of which thee may well be proud. Everywhere do I hear praises of the Delaware men. How does the new regiment come on?"

"New regiment?" I exclaimed in surprise.

"Ay," said Colonel Hall, nodding at me. "New regiment. We could not fight with a force one hundred strong."

"One hundred strong!" I repeated aghast.

"Yes, one hundred;" he replied impatiently. "I said one hundred, and never an officer save five."

"But," said I, "where are they; not deserted, have they?" for still I did not understand.

"By Jove, colonel," put in Forsythe, "you forget that Hilton has been prisoner and does not know."

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But by this time I *did* know, and my heart stood still until I heard him answer: "Why, Mr. Hilton, they fell in that last battle, all save one hundred and five men, most of whom have returned home for re-enlistment."

But I could bear no more. A great mist rose before my eyes; something in my chest about my old wound began to hurt, and I simply laid my head upon my arms and wept like a baby. Out of all that regiment, near one thousand strong a short fifteen months before, to be left but one hundred and five men, and among the missing were some of my dearest friends! Was it any wonder that I should forget my late found manhood and that the tears should run down my face like rain?

Mr. Morris at least was not surprised, for with ready sympathy he put his hand upon my shoulder:

"Thee takes it too much to heart, my boy," said he; "why, those who were left never wept. Six remained at the front, and the rest are re-enlisting now at home."

"That's where I should be," I replied quickly.

"But thy parole?"

"True, I had forgotten it."

"Never thee mind, lad, I'll fix that. If Robert Morris does say it himself, he has done too much

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for his country to be refused a favor such as an exchange. Do thee go home and rest and get thy strength again, and stay there till thee hears from me or Mr. McKean or Mr. Read."

"Ay," said Colonel Hall, "and I may as well tell you, Hilton, that your name will be forwarded for a captaincy in the new line regiment. What, lad! Take heart! Take heart, 't was but the fortune of war. And now, Mr. Morris, if you will allow me, we will discuss some matters of a little deeper import," with a humorous glance at me; and he began to converse with Mr. Morris about the financial affairs of the corps to which he was attached.

In a moment or two I rose, and excusing my departure on the score of my late illness, I left the room with Forsythe, after a cordial invitation from Mr. Morris to call on him whenever I was in the city; and so we walked slowly back to our quarters.

"Let's go to the stables," said I, when we reached the stoop; "I'd like to look in at Miss Dainty before bed."

The stable door was thrown open, and we entered. "Miss Dainty! Miss Dainty!" I called eagerly with a low whistle, and a faint whinny of recognition from the darkness greeted me. I ran into her stall, and she rubbed her head affection-

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ately against me, snapping playfully at my arm, then whinnied again.

All this seems childish, I doubt not, in the narration; but if you have ever loved a horse, bred, raised, and broken it, petted it, shared with it perils and privations, you will know how I felt when my mare pressed lovingly against me.

"Oh, you beauty!" I whispered in her taper ear. "Home to-morrow,—home and Kitty! Do you remember *her*, Miss Dainty?" and another low whinny answered "yes." Then with a last good-night caress, I went out, and followed Forsythe into the inn, where we had some hot rum punch and then found our way to bed, saying with Sancho Panza, "God bless the man who first invented sleep."

I am not going to say much of my ride home, the next day. It was cold, bitterly cold, and I could ride but slowly, so that it seemed an eternity till I had passed Wilmington, and the merry click and patter of my horse's hoofs checked off the miles rapidly toward home; and how I paused a short quarter of a mile from town and looked lovingly at the group of brown tree-tops and scattered spires and the long expanse of the river, from Deep Water Point to the bight of the Horse Shoe Cove, choked now with the ice; and how I rode

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slowly into the town and drew up at an old familiar house, and dismounting tossed my reins to one of the men.

I ran quickly up the steps and knocked. "Is Miss Kitty in, Molly?" I asked the old negro who answered my summons.

"Lawd save us, it's Mar'se Dick sho'! Co'se she's in, suh; come right in." And I walked into the warmly lighted drawing-room.

No one was there, and I took a seat to wait. Hardly was I seated than I heard a quick step in the hall, then a quicker question and answer, the door-knob turning, and —

"Why, Dick! Dick! Dick! I thought you were dead," said a choking voice, as She entered the room. For myself, a great mist before my eyes prevented my seeing; but I could still feel two of the softest arms in all the world about my neck as I took my sweetheart in my arms and kissed her. As for her, she simply lay in my arms and wept as though her very heart would break; then —

"Oh, Dick, you don't know what I have suffered in all these months with never a word from you, and the list of those missing so incomplete, and then the one with your name in it — Oh, it was terrible! But you look ill and pale. Have you

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been ill? Where have you been? Are you glad to see me?"

The last question I answered first, mutely. Then the others in their order.

"You poor boy! What you must have suffered!" and she put up her lips in a suggestive way, of which I immediately took advantage. "And now you are home for a long rest, where I can see you and take care of you. I must make it up to you, Dick, for all the time you have suffered."

But I shall say no more of that short hour, — too brief by far, as all such hours are, for the short winter twilight was at hand and I had not yet been home. So I raised her, for we had been sitting on a softly cushioned divan in the corner near the fire.

"I must go now, Kit dear," said I.

"Tell me," she said, her fingers playing nervously with a button on the facings of my coat, "what did you ever do with that piece of ribbon, Dick, I gave you for a sword-knot, the night you marched? Do you remember?"

"Remember?" said I; "look!" and opening my coat, I showed her the old faded sword-knot, where indeed it had been ever since that day of our first battle.

"And now good-by, Kit, until to-morrow;" and again I started for the door.

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"Ah, no!" she said, "I must see Miss Dainty too;" and nothing would do but she must accompany me to the block in front, though I was afraid of her taking cold, and give some sugar to the mare, who whinnied with pleasure, and pressed her soft muzzle against the wealth of golden hair, the dearest thing to me in all the world.

Then I mounted and rode slowly homeward in the gathering twilight. From the summit of the low hill to the southwest, I could see, far off, like the twinkle of a distant star, the firelight through the windows at home; and we tripped on through the light snow that muffled my horse's tread, until we at last reached the gate. I drew up at the horse-block, and called loudly for one of the men. No answer, and again I called until the echoes came faintly back to me from the hollows behind the house, and the horses in the home-paddock neighed loudly in answer to my call. Surely some one was there. Kitty would have told me were they absent, so I threw my reins over a post, and spreading my cloak over my mare, ran noisily up the steps, and striding quickly over the porch to a jingling accompaniment from my spurs and sword-sheath, pushed open the door and entered.

As I stood in the hall, taking off my great-coat

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and thinking of the surprise my arrival would occasion, the door of the library opened, and my father came into the hall. Seeing my figure in the shadow he came forward.

"Who is that?" he asked, shading his eyes with his hand.

"Your prodigal son, father," I answered, laughing, "come home to stay with you a while;" but I had hardly begun the sentence than he had me by both hands.

"Why, Richard, my son! Richard! Is it indeed you?" and he gripped my hands so warmly that it almost pained me. Then patting me on the shoulder, he pushed me toward the door of the library. From the threshold I caught sight of my mother and Bess and my two brothers, seated by the fire, as we all had done so often in times past. A great jug of cider stood near the glow and a pile of apples, just as it had been when I was a boy. My mother and Bess were knitting—socks and comforters for the troops, as I afterwards discovered. My father motioned me, smiling, to stand in the shadow, and then he entered the room.

"Who was it, Tom?" asked my mother, looking up.

"Some soldier from the front. One of our State line," said he, "who has returned home."

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They were on their feet in an instant. "Where is he? Who is he? Where is he from? Has he seen Dick?"

"Steady," said my father, laughing, as he raised his hand. "Yes," he went on, "he has seen Dick, and he is well. Coming home, indeed. In fact — oh, Dick!" he called, "you can come in now." So I entered and went straight to my mother, who said not one word, but kissed me; and Bess too came to me and threw both arms about my neck and fairly wept. As for the boys, they threw themselves upon me with a whoop of delight.

Then I was pushed into a chair, a man was sent for my horse, and I was made to tell, with full particulars, the story of our two campaigns. And they sat and listened far into the night, and when I reached the end, and told them how we were disbanded, one hundred and five men out of near one thousand, the flower of the State, my mother and Bess burst into tears, and my father, an odd light in his eyes belying his composure, his fingers gripping nervously the arms of his chair, sat nodding stern approval.

"I wish I were ten years younger," said he at last, when I had finished, and I knew that but for my mother, I should have my father with me in the next campaign.

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"So," I finished, "I will wait till I have entirely got my strength and my exchange, and then back to the regiment, and this time to my company, for in this next campaign I shall be captain."

"Have you seen Kitty?" asked Bess, mischievously.

"Yes," I returned, coloring.

"What does she say to that? To your going back, I mean," she asked significantly. Then, seriously, "Have n't you done enough for honor? Can't you now settle down quietly to your profession, Dick?"

"For honor, yes," I replied, "but you know, dear, I'm not fighting for honor. My views have changed entirely. I shall see the war through, if it please God, and then turn my sword into a ploughshare."

"By the way," said my father, "there's an English officer here in town, a Captain Dwining. Cavalry, I think. A charming fellow, they say. We have been doing what we can to make his stay a pleasant one. I think you will like him;" and so we chatted on until, bedtime being past, the dying fire warned us of the lateness of the hour. So with a hearty good-night to all, I found my way to my room, where I soon was enjoying the dreamless sleep of utter exhaustion.



CHAPTER VI

ANY one who has undergone, for two long years, the rigors and hardships of camp-life, its privations and sufferings, will readily understand how pleasant it was to enjoy even comparative luxury. My home seemed indeed almost princely, though in reality it was modest and unpretentious.

For several weeks my longest trips were to town, to get what news I could, and that was little enough in all conscience, and — But surely I need not say what other reason made Mr. Weston's house seem to me the Elysian Fields. And yet even in the Elysian Fields I suppose one can find some rank weeds growing, else why was it that I should find such in mine?

It was on one bright moonlight night in April that I had Miss Dainty saddled and rode slowly into town for the second time that day. The moon was just rising, the Jersey shore showing a faint, silvery line against the background of sky and woods, and the river, far as the eye could reach,

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seemed a stream of molten silver, or of some darker body held down with silver filigree.

Now the road, be it known, between my home and New Castle is none of the best, and I cantered along it very carefully in order that the mare should not be tripped. As we trotted slowly down the hill at the edge of the town, a horseman just ahead of me attracted my attention. Not knowing who it was, but thinking it must be one of my friends, I called out the soldier's watchword: "Halt! who goes there?"

"A friend with a countersign," was the answer with a half laugh, followed by, from me —

"Advance, friend, and give the —" but his horse stumbled at the word and threw him heavily.

The whole thing occurred so quickly that I had no time to even express any surprise. I simply sat and stared at the prostrate figure, for how a man could be thrown as he was, was then and now is utterly incomprehensible to me.

I was recalled to my senses by seeing his horse scramble to his feet, and I sprang from my saddle to assist him to rise, which he did, swearing heartily at the top of his voice. With never a word to me, not even a 'thank you,' he seized his bits, reined his horse back into the road, and vaulting into saddle galloped off toward the town.

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Seeing that my company was not desired, I reined in Miss Dainty, and followed at a slower pace until he was hid by the shadows, when I shook up my mare and did not again draw rein until I had given her over into the hands of Mr. Weston's groom.

Quite a group was gathered in the parlor when I entered, mostly young people with whom I had grown up. Several of our elders were seated at a small table, playing cards and drinking tea made of raspberry leaves, for we had used no tea for several years. A bright fire burned at the end of the room, and by it stood Kitty, talking with her father.

Seeing me enter, she colored warmly, holding out her hand, while the old gentleman took me by the arm and drew me nearer to him.

"Dick," said he, "I want to introduce you to an English officer who is here in town with the Hales. Where is he, Kitty?"

"I think he has not yet come," she answered, frowning slightly. Just as she spoke, as though in answer to her father's question, the door opened, and a gentleman, to me a stranger, entered the room.

I do not wish to misjudge, nor do I wish to mislead any one. I know that by expressing my

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opinion I shall probably forfeit whatever interest may have attached to me ; but I must say that it was *not* jealousy that made me dislike Dwining at first sight. Every one, I think, is prejudiced for or against a new acquaintance, by which prejudices our subsequent opinions are formed. Our first thoughts God gives us, our second we make for ourselves.

I am, however, free to confess that whatever my first opinion might have been, it was not bettered one whit by noticing the abrupt manner in which he swung across the room, with never a glance at his host or hostess, and began talking to some of the gentlemen. He looked a gentleman too. He was rather short and squarely built, an ideal figure for a cavalry man. His clothing was far more showy than that of the gentlemen about him,—a light blue silk coat, white shorts and stockings making a display of color against which our more sombre black and brown and blue seemed homely by comparison. But what I disliked most in his appearance and demeanor was the shifty look of his eyes, looking all around and over one, but never by any chance straight at one.

“Captain Dwining, allow me to introduce you to Captain Hilton of our State forces,” said Mr. Weston, leading me forward.

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"Ah, Mr. Hilton," with a cool ignoring of my title, "I am glad to meet you. Have you seen any service? Yours is a peculiar service, and in your army commissions appear to be given in a most slipshod manner. Scarcely an officer I have met knows how to use the sword he wears."

"It would ill become us, sir, to lay claim to being swordsmen," I replied quietly.

"Ha! ha! I thought so," he replied, laughing loudly. "But you probably have seen some actual service, have you not; taken part in at least some skirmishes, eh?"

"Yes," said I, coolly, though at heart very angry with him and his bad taste in starting the conversation in such a channel. "As you say, sir, I have struck in, in a few slight skirmishes. The last were Trenton and Princeton, and before these were Harlem, White Plains, and Long Island."

It was his turn now, and he paled a little with mortification and anger as he gazed at me.

Mr. Weston, seeing the somewhat strained relations, began talking quickly at random.

"Why, Dwining," said he, "what has happened to your hand?" pointing to his wrist, which was badly scraped and scratched.

"My horse stumbled," returned the other, "and

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I had a fall this evening. Some unmannered country yokel sat by on his horse and watched the whole performance, though I am bound to say he helped me at last."

I had no doubt that a direct insult was intended, for I supposed he had recognized in me the person who had assisted him. Still I did not wish to make a scene, and I thought some allowance should be made. Indeed, it was the custom of the British officers of that day to decry us and make a mock of us as provincials, though I trust that by now they know better. By the way he eyed me I was sure he recognized me, and so contented myself with saying, —

"For the credit of our people, Captain Dwining, I will say it was no country yokel who came to your assistance. It was I, and I only regret I could not be of greater service."

"Why do you say it for the credit of your people?" he asked, with a half smile.

"To make you understand that —"

"Dick, Dick," said a sweet voice from the end of the room.

It was Kitty calling me, so merely finishing my remark by a low bow I left him, and turning away I joined Kitty.

"Oh, Dick," she said, "it is so nice of you to

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have come in to-night. What do you think of Captain Dwining?"

"Why," I returned, "that he'd be the better for a sound thrash —"

"Dick, I'm ashamed of you," she interrupted petulantly. "I should think you'd have too much pride to show your feelings so."

"My feelings?" said I, utterly at a loss for her meaning.

"Yes," she replied; "you're as bad as Will Grahame. He tried to fasten a quarrel on poor Captain Dwining, but it came to nothing. I thought you were above that, Dick."

A light suddenly dawned upon me, and I realized that I had said too much. I was not asked to criticise Dwining — but to admire him. I supposed by her remark about showing my feelings she meant that I was envious of Dwining, but I entertained no such feeling.

"Well, Kitty," I began, but I was interrupted by the approach of Dwining himself.

"Miss Weston," with an obsequious bow, "may I not request you to give us a little music?"

"Why, yes," said she, half doubtingly; "if —" and she looked at me apologetically.

I bowed, and pulling open the spinet, arranged the lights for her.

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I had not often heard her sing. Her voice was of no great compass, but was remarkably sweet, with a peculiar sympathetic vibration I have never heard elsewhere. Of course I was a prejudiced listener too, which may account for my partiality. As for the song, it was little enough, a mere jingle that she had occasionally sung for me. It ran :

“ Their ladies’ glove
That gallants love,
And round which romance lingers,
Hid hands that were
Not half so fair
As are your dainty fingers.

“ My heart, O Sweet !
Lies at your feet,
All conquered by your power !
And shows to all
Love’s gentle thrall,
That reigns within your bower.

“ So you retain
Your loving reign
So dear to all us mortals ;
If I, life past,
Reach Heaven at last
’T is your hands ope the portals.”

It was not the song which made me look up, though that little ballad was almost sacred to me

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because of certain associations with it and Kitty. When I did look up it was to be confronted by a series of knowing nods and winks from several present, endeavoring to attract my attention to Dwining and Kitty, who were conversing in low, interested tones in one of the deep window embrasures. Now, I was not in the least degree jealous; no one but a fool is that, or at least shows it, but I did distinctly disapprove of Kitty making herself noticeable with *any* one. Yes, of course, there was an exception. Any remonstrance on my part, I had sense enough to know, would only make matters worse, and I was morally certain that the old women in the room would have a very pretty romance woven from the whole cloth by the next morning. And I knew too that my own character in the story would be an unenviable one. Knowing this, I decided to leave for home, and having bid farewell to Mr. Weston, I turned to Kitty and said good-night.

"Oh, Dick, must you go now? You'll be sure to come in to-morrow morning, won't you? I have something I want to tell you."

"Yes," replied I, "I'll be in — especially as I have something to tell you. And so good-night." And I ran down the steps, almost upsetting old Mrs. Rogers, who was standing at the bottom.

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"Ah, Richard," she said, laughing and tapping me lightly on the shoulder, "you should not run away and leave a clear field to a rival. 'Tis a dangerous game;" and she cackled merrily as I took my horse from the groom and mounted, muttering a Spanish blessing on her. I am ashamed to say that I vented my ill-humor on Miss Dainty, as I rode homeward that night. 'Twas the only time I ever in my life put spurs to her, and we reached home both of us in a lather.

I was very angry with Kitty and with myself when I went to bed, and indeed I was not in the best of humors when I awoke the next morning. Breakfast and a pipe with my father put me once more at peace with the world, however, and it would have been difficult for me to have picked a quarrel with my worst enemy when I drew up before Mr. Weston's house and bowed over Kitty's hand extended in greeting.

"Oh, Dick," she said, when we were seated in the morning-room, "have you had any news from the front?"

"No," said I; "why do you ask?"

"Why," said she, "there is a rumor of our men having been defeated. Captain Dwining was here just after breakfast to ask father, but he had heard nothing reliable."

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"Rather an early hour for him to call, was it not?" I asked.

"Early? Why, no! We often have persons drop in for breakfast, Captain Dwining especially. Father, you know, has taken quite a liking to him; he and Frank are such great friends."

"Frank!" said I, surprised. "Who in the world is Frank?"

"Who is Frank?" repeated my sweetheart, looking at me as though I were one demented. "Why, my half brother, of course."

"Your half —! Nonsense!" said I, somewhat rudely, I fear, for the news naturally staggered me.

She colored warmly. "Why, Dick, what do you mean? Of course he is my half-brother, Frank Caverton. Did n't you know that my mother was married twice before she died, and that my father was her second husband? She married first Henry Caverton of Lincolnshire, England, who was Frank's father."

Once assured that she was in earnest, I asked, "But, my gracious! Kitty, how came it that you never told me this before?"

"I supposed, of course, you knew it," she replied. Then more softly, "You know my mother's loss has been such a blow to all of us that we never speak of her."

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Which was true enough. Mrs. Weston had died about four months before war broke out, and I do not think I had heard her name mentioned by her family a half-dozen times after her death.

"But, Kitty, tell me more about Frank," said I.

"There is n't much to tell," said she. "He is about twenty-nine or thirty years old, and is a captain in the Guards. I think they are in this country, now. I never knew it till a short time ago, when father told me. It seems an awful thing, Dick, to think that you and he may some day actually meet each other in battle. It would simply kill me if either of you should injure the other."

"Oh, you need not fear that," said I, laughing. "There is too much room in the country for us ever to meet. Do you not know, dear, that it was your brother's own messmates who were so kind to me after Princeton, when I was wounded?"

"I owe them a debt of gratitude for that," she said softly. "I do wish you could meet him. Father says he is such a fine fellow, and I am sure you would like each other."

"Then, I'll wager that fellow Dwining is no friend of his," said I. "For of all the —"

"Captain Dwining, Miss Kitty," said one of the servants, opening the door to admit the visitor;

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and I am afraid I said something between my teeth which could in no wise be construed into a blessing, as he entered the room.

He, too, was evidently surprised to see me, for the smile changed into a decidedly cool bow as he turned to me.

As he sat there facing me, I could form a tolerably accurate estimate of the man, and I was really surprised to find how much he improved on acquaintance. His rudeness of the night before I had neither forgotten nor forgiven, and it seemed aggravated by his manner, which plainly showed that he had conceived a violent personal dislike for me, as indeed I had for him. In his manner, when he chose, he was easy and polite, showing that quiet deference toward women which is most calculated to win their regard. In short, he was a fair specimen of that class of Englishmen who are polite to those whom they may like, never otherwise.

I suppose we had sat so for perhaps an hour when one of the servants came to the door and asked to "see Miss Kitty," who, apologizing for leaving us, went out, saying she would return directly.

Dwining and I, who had been maintaining a purely formal conversation on Kitty's account, sank into silence, which he at last broke.

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"When do you return to the seat of war, Captain Hilton?"

"I do not know," I replied. "I am, like you, awaiting an exchange."

"It must be rather pleasant," said he, "for having played Achilles in the field, to return home and find the part of Thersites awaiting you."

Now I am slow to take offence as a rule, but his words angered me, and I spoke in answer, somewhat rudely, I have often thought.

"Far better find a part, sir, than to embody a worse one."

"Which?" said he, half smiling.

"One of Æsop's, —The Ass in the Lion's clothing, whose bray betrayed him."

He flushed angrily. His intention, I saw, had been to insult me, and force me to challenge him. Not desiring to be put in the unenviable light I knew I must appear by doing so, for I well knew that my kind friends would ascribe our meeting to motives very different from the true one, I anticipated him by giving him a Roland for his Oliver, bringing forth the question: —

"Do you officers fence, Captain Hilton?"

"Some do," said I, shortly.

"Do you?"

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"I am no swordsman, but I know enough of it to answer my purpose."

"Which is — ?" he said, laughing.

"To compel a certain amount of gentlemanly consideration from others," I returned.

"Ah, I should like a turn with you," said he, quickly.

"With all my heart," I replied; "I will let you know the length of my sword to-morrow." I had hardly finished when Kitty re-entered the room.

He bowed gravely, and soon afterward took his departure, leaving me in a perfect agony of fear lest Kitty should discover what was afoot, in which case I knew I should have no peace.

A short time afterward I too took my leave and cantered slowly homeward, over a very different road from that of the cold February night when I had come home, a short six weeks before.

Hearing my horse's hoof-beats in the avenue, my father came out upon the veranda, a parcel in his hand.

"'Tis for you, Dick," he said quickly; "it came from Dover by special courier just now. The man is in the kitchen."

I broke open the little red wafers and tore open the blue wrapper. A bulky parchment document fell out, which I found to be my commission as

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captain of the Delaware line. Another letter from Mr. Morris informed me of my exchange, and a third from Mr. McKinly ordered me to report at once to Mr. McKean in Philadelphia, who would have letters to send to Colonel Hall; and lastly I was to lose no time, spare no expense, as the letters were most important.

I showed them to my father. What to do I did not know. My duty called me to leave at once, and yet there was my meeting with Dwining. Could I in honor go without meeting him? And in my distraction I told my father all.

He stood and listened, and when I had done remained for a moment quiet.

"Dick," said he at last, "I say this. 'T is a mere question of rudeness passing unchallenged. Your honor is not concerned. I know exactly how you feel, and I tell you this: when your country needs your life, you have no right to fling it away in private quarrels unless your honor is directly involved. I say go back to your regiment, and may God bring you back to us again safe and sound;" and he shook me warmly by the hand.

In a few minutes I had bid farewell to all, and with all my earthly belongings rolled in a blanket behind my saddle, I was riding slowly for the second time that day toward town and Kitty.

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She was greatly surprised when she saw me, this time in uniform.

"Oh, Dick," she said, half tearfully, "what does this mean?"

"It means, darling," said I, as I kissed her farewell, "that I must say good-bye again, — for a long time, dear, I am afraid. And if anything should happen —"

"Ah, don't! don't!" she said slowly, cowering in my arms as though some one had struck her. "Don't talk that way, Dick! It is bad luck! I should never make a Spartan wife to tell you to come back with your shield, or on it. I should say, leave the shield and everything, only — come," and she began to cry softly.

"Ah, Kit! sweetheart!" I pleaded, "you make it so hard for me to do my duty. I must go, dear. Better men than I fall every day, and —"

"But *they* are not men I love," she retorted quickly, "while you —" and she began again to sob, so that I had to turn away to examine a loose buckle that my fool of a groom had not attended to, which was all that saved me.

A last long farewell, a lingering tender pressure of her little hand, and I vaulted into saddle and rode quickly eastward on the dusty pike, toward the more active scenes of a soldier's life.



CHAPTER VII

MY despatches, the letter told me, were important, so I pushed steadily northward as rapidly as was possible. Congress, I knew, three weeks before had moved their place of meeting a second time from Baltimore to Philadelphia, and I was naturally anxious to know what would be forthcoming.

The British forces, I was aware, still lay in New York, so there could be no great danger of an important battle for some time. Still, I was worried; of course there was no reason for a mere captain to trouble his head over such weighty matters, and yet I could not help speculating on the prospects. Would Burgoyne transport his forces by ship to New York? Or would he, capturing Ticonderoga, a strong strategic point, take Albany, and so control the Hudson, and then uniting his army with Howe's men move on Philadelphia? For the life of me I could not tell.

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Our forces, numerically small, had to cover all this territory, New York, the Highlands, and Philadelphia. We numbered but five thousand men. Wiser heads than mine might well be troubled.

I reached Philadelphia late that evening and delivered my despatches to Mr. McKean, whom I found at the City Tavern, and was informed that I was to report for immediate service to Colonel Hall, who was with the main force in camp at Middlebrook, New Jersey, near the road that led from New Brunswick to Philadelphia. Accordingly I left the next morning, was ferried across the Delaware at McConkey's Ford, just above Trenton, and that same afternoon rode into camp, tired, hot, but at heart very glad to rejoin my messmates.

My reception was all that I could have desired, and for three weeks we were hard at work getting our men into shape, for I naturally desired my company to make the best showing in the regiment. I was glad to find that the company to which I was assigned was recruited largely from my own county, men I knew, and of whom I was absolutely certain.

With the exception of a few foraging parties, scarcely any one left camp, as leave was difficult to obtain. Occasionally some one would be sent out on a reconnoitring party, but that did not fall

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to my lot until one day in August an orderly came to the tent which Forsythe, Corse, Ellis, and I occupied in common.

“Colonel Hall’s compliments, sir. Will Captain Hilton please report to him at once?”

I sprang to my feet, put on my coat, buckled on my sword, and hurried out.

“What in the world is up?” asked Ellis, as I left.

“I give it up, my boy,” said I, as I left. “Don’t ask conundrums. Wait.”

“Captain Hilton,” said Colonel Hall, returning my salute, “General Washington’s orders are that you take half a troop of cavalry and ride as far east as New Brunswick; thence you will patrol the road east toward Amboy and along the Raritan. The Tories and Skinners are thick about there, and we must break up some of their trading with the enemy. Take Mr. Forsythe with you, and take care of yourself. Leave at once.”

I saluted and hurried out, and with a whoop of delight ran into my tent, shied my cap into the corner, and pulling Forsythe over on his back I began to pummel him. He rolled over good-humoredly, and from his recumbent position asked with a laugh, —

“What’s up, Dick?”

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"Mr. Forsythe," I began pompously, "you will at once get up, wash the molasses off your face,"—they had been eating dinner during my absence,— "assume an intelligent look, and march at once with Captain Hilton on a reconnoitring party to Amboy." He was up in a moment, as eager as I was for our excursion, and a few minutes later found us trotting quickly out of camp at the head of some twenty men, all well mounted.

Our object was primarily to get what news we could of the enemy, do as much damage as was possible to their friends the Tories, and, lastly, to drive into camp what cattle we could obtain from the same sources. In fact, it was practically a roving commission, and one which was most welcome to us after the monotony of camp routine.

For several days we wandered aimlessly along the Amboy turnpike, seeing no one save an occasional farmer. As for the Tories, we might have imagined that they had simply awaited our arrival to fête us. Nothing was too good for us. In many cases the "fatted calf" was killed, and I am bound to say that when it was not killed for us, we drove it off, so it came to the same thing in the end.

We had captured a good many cattle and sent

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them under guard to camp, so that my party now numbered but ten men, including Forsythe and myself.

One bright afternoon, Tom and I saddled up, and leaving the camp in charge of Sergeant Hollis we cantered quietly along the shady pike and turned into one of the quiet country lanes that form the most attractive features of the rural scenery in that part of the country.

We had ridden for I suppose an hour when we suddenly became thirsty, and began looking round for some means of quenching our thirst. No welcome spring appearing, I hailed an old man whom I saw in a field near, and asked where we could get some water.

His spoken answer was unintelligible, but from his motions I inferred that he was pointing us in some particular direction, so we kept on up the lane, and finally drew up before a large iron gate, opening upon a broad, well-kept lawn. A square red brick house, mostly overgrown with ivy, was set well back among a group of cedar-trees, and on the broad porch in front, a group of gentlemen were seated round a punch-bowl; indeed, I thought once that I caught sight of the flutter of a woman's gown among the shrubbery.

Without dismounting, I opened the gate with

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the heel of my scabbard, and, Tom closely following, I walked Miss Dainty leisurely up the gravelled drive, and bowing to an elderly gentleman, who had risen and was watching us, we walked our horses to the back of the grounds, where I caught sight of a well-sweep in the distance, within fair view of the party on the porch. Indeed, their conversation too was plainly audible, — curious questionings of, “Who can they be?” “Such impertinence!” floating over to us.

But it was not until I had dismounted, seized the sweep, and drawn up the bucket full of water, from which Tom and I both drank, that we caught a hearty laugh from the porch, and then the words in a man’s deep voice, —

“Oh, they’re only damned Yankees, and a horse-bucket is good enough for them to drink out of.”

I laughed and looked at Forsythe. His eyes had a curious, half angry gleam in them: “Here, Dick, hold my horse, and come if I call you;” and flinging me his reins, he strode off toward the house.

“Hold on, Tom! where —” I began. But he never heeded me, but stamped up the steps and with never a “by your leave” to the men on the porch, strode clattering to the table in the centre

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of the party, and the next moment swung down the steps, bearing in his arms the enormous silver punch-bowl, the pride of the household, from which they had been drinking. Coming straight over to the well where I stood, he filled the bowl with water, holding it first to Miss Dainty, then to his own horse; and when they had drunk, he gave it a kick across the grass. "There," said he, "I've taught them a lesson;" and swinging into saddle he turned coolly to the astonished group, who were now swearing volubly, and took off his cap.

"Gentlemen," said he, "my duty compels me to say 'au revoir.' Your hospitality has been charming in its simplicity. And, sir," — turning to the angriest of the party, whom he judged to be the owner of the bowl, "allow me to compliment you on the excessively chaste design of your horse-buckets, — exceeded only by that of a gold one I have at home, from which I feed my pigs;" and we rode rapidly down the road into the pike, laughing heartily.

"We had better ride fast," said Tom; "we've a good ten miles to ride, and I would not be surprised if our friends should try to cut us off. You know Rapnel's Horse lies but three miles from this, and those fellows were mad enough for anything when we left. They'll never forgive that episode of the

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punch-bowl ;” and shaking up his horse into a rapid gallop we pressed on at our best pace.

We had ridden some four miles, and were slowly walking our horses up a steep rise to breathe them, when I suddenly drew up, motioning to Tom to do likewise.

“What’s the matter ?” he asked. But the rapid beat of horse-hoofs to my left answered his question. At the top of the rise, some two hundred yards away, the road forked, and we galloped forward to pass this point and find out what was afoot. Reaching the crest of the hill, I turned in my saddle and looked up the other road. Barely four hundred yards away was a rider on a great bay horse, and behind him came a group of some eight or ten riders in ill-assorted uniforms, whom we knew at once to be what we called “Skinners,” miserable hangers-on of both armies, ready to kill and plunder any helpless straggler from either.

Presently the man saw us, and was evidently at a loss. A glance at his pursuers removed his doubts, — I afterward found out it was our uniforms that reassured him, — and he came on toward us, lifting his horse at every stride.

“We’ll have to stand by the poor devil, Dick,” said Forsythe, grimly.

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I nodded, and loosened my sword in the sheath, looking to my pistol holsters.

Forsythe looked round. "Look," said he, "there 's the very place for a stand;" and he pointed to the bottom of the hill, past which ran a very deep but narrow stream, its steep banks covered with a tangle of blackberry-bushes, a narrow plank bridge being the only means of crossing.

So motioning the man forward, we galloped to the bottom of the hill, crossed the bridge, and turned our horses loose, merely throwing the reins over their heads.

The stranger had kept his lead, and a moment later thundered across the bridge and dismounted, all panting and exhausted.

I sprang to the middle of the bridge, and, with Tom's help, threw over some eight or ten planks, for the flooring was loose, making a gap that no horse would leap, running back to the bushes when we had finished.

"Now," said I, "as soon as they're in range fire at the horses. Disable them, and we can leave when we wish."

The stranger had unslung a short double-barrelled rifle and very deliberately lay down behind a rock, on which he laid his piece, taking

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deliberate aim at the group some one hundred yards away.

"Four to one, in Spanish milled dollars, I down the man on the black horse," said he.

"Done," said I, breathlessly, "but be sure to shoot the horse; then they can't pursue us."

"Missed him, by Jove," he muttered, as he fired.

"Never mind," grinned Tom; "you dismounted one twenty feet to his left. Try again." And he fired the other barrel, bringing down another, for at a hundred yards one could hit them with his eyes closed.

At the second shot they paused just out of pistol range, and presently one of them came forward with a bit of very filthy rag tied to a stick.

I went forward and took my seat on the pile of planks, awaiting him. Presently he came up to me and said with an attempt at civility, —

"What do you mean, sir, by firing on us?"

"Is our meaning not made clear enough?" I asked.

"We are Continental troops," said he, "doing skirmish duty, and that man yonder is a British spy, bearing despatches from Lord Howe, and I demand his immediate surrender."

"Go to the devil, confound you!" roared the little man, from behind the rock. "If it was n't

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for that bit of dirty rag, I'd fill you as full of holes as a colander."

I held up my hand for silence. "Sir," said I, "that man yonder may be a spy; if so, I will treat him as such before the proper tribunal; but assuredly I will not surrender him to such a choice gang of camp-followers as those yonder."

At that he got angry. "Then," he began —

"That will do," I interrupted. "Clear out, I have no more to say. Off with you," and he retreated, incautiously throwing away his improvised flag, upon which the little fellow he was so anxious to capture, immediately fired at him, knocking off his hat, whereupon he started on a dead run for his companions.

"Look here," said I; "no more of that, sir. That man was under a peace flag."

"Not he! He dropped it!" exclaimed the other, excitedly. "Now, listen! You helped me out of a bad way, and I'll repay you by —"

"There goes one of those rascals for aid," put in Forsythe, quickly. "We'd best get out of this." Which we accordingly did.

"Now," said I, when we had gone some little distance, "who are you, sir? Your pursuers said you are a spy."

"I am no spy," he returned. "My name is

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Andrew Langdon, and my home is near New York. I bear news to General Washington."

"What news?" I asked.

"To whom do I tell it?" he inquired cautiously.

"To Captain Hilton, sir, of the Delaware Regiment," I made answer.

He bowed. "Then, sir, I'll tell you. Howe sailed last night from New York for Chesapeake."

I stared at him in disbelief. "What —" I began.

"Sir, it is true as gospel. Lord Howe sailed last night with forty ships of war and seventeen thousand men."

"This is news indeed," I exclaimed, while Tom gave utterance to a fervent "Thank God!" "News that will make our commissariat rum the sweeter. It means that the period of inaction is past, and another active campaign at hand. Come along, lads. It must be 'boot and saddle' now, with never a rein drawn until we reach camp;" and suiting the action to the word, I leaned forward, unchained the curb, loosed the girths, as I sat, and presently, pressing Miss Dainty into a gallop, followed by my companions, who were singing in no very melodious tones "The White Cockade," we galloped down the pike, never drawing rein until we reached the spot where my men were camped.

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Ten minutes more and my little squadron was galloping steadily southwestward, never slackening speed, save to breathe the horses, until we had safely passed our lines.

Bidding Forsythe dismiss the men, I rode straight to headquarters with Langdon and pulled up at the door, my mare in a lather. Giving her to an orderly, I entered and found myself in the midst of quite a group.

General Washington was in the centre, and round him were gathered Knox and Sullivan, Cadwallader and Thompson.

General Sullivan, to whom I was known, rose as he returned my salute.

"What is it, captain?" he asked.

I made my report and pushed Langdon forward.

"Why," said he, "I too have some news for you, sir. The British have embarked seventeen thousand men, with forty ships of war and seventy transports, to go to Chesapeake and march on Philadelphia. They sailed yesterday."

Sullivan and Knox shook hands enthusiastically, the artillery-man swearing heartily. Sullivan looked at the commander-in-chief, who said something in a low tone to him. Then to me —

"Captain, will you request Colonel Hall to keep his men ready at a moment's notice, and see that

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the chiefs of the other regiments do the same? We will break camp on the receipt of definite news."

I saluted and hurried out, found Colonel Hall, delivered my orders, and the next morning found us pushing rapidly over the Bordentown road to McConkey's Ferry, to take part in another active campaign.



CHAPTER VIII

FOR some time we had been absolutely without news of the enemy. Then in July it was rumored that the British fleet had passed up between the capes of Delaware; but, following that, we learned that they had left that locality, and on the 7th of August had been seen to the southward. From that time on, everything was shrouded in uncertainty. No news could be obtained, no tidings learned. Where was the enemy? Had they really gone to the southward, and would they next appear off the Virginias; or would our general be drawn into Maryland only to find Howe's army reappear, this time in his rear?

That was what we most feared. Could Howe draw us once across the Delaware, he could easily retrace his course, ascend the Hudson, capture the few posts we held along its banks, and, co-operating with General Burgoyne's army, sweep everything before him. Then too there

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was the South. Nothing could be easier than to move on Charleston before our army could even be got under arms.

This being the condition of affairs, our feelings can better be imagined than described when, on the 19th of August, we got news that the British fleet had been sighted on the 16th, inside the capes of Chesapeake, standing northward under easy canvas.

Accordingly we were got under arms, and on the morning of the 24th of August, we broke camp and marched rapidly southwestward into Philadelphia. After a stop of but a few hours there, more to encourage our friends and intimidate our foes than for any other reason, we once more took up our line of march for the Brandywine, and thence still further south to Wilmington, where we camped on the surrounding hills.

What my feelings were, it is beyond my power to describe. Here within ten miles of me was everything I loved best on earth. At any moment I was likely to fall in battle, and yet I could not even see them all until after — and then the thought would occur to me that there might be no “after,” and I had to summarily check such forebodings and devote myself to the business now at hand.

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Then came the news that Cornwallis had attacked Maxwell and driven him across White Clay Creek. Save Maxwell's engagement, a mere cavalry skirmish, no action took place until Howe himself, making a feigned attack in front, endeavored under cover of the fight to get around our right flank. Had he been successful, we should have been penned up between the Delaware and the Chesapeake, the hills behind us, and for all we knew, Burgoyne, with Howe himself, ready to attack us in front, having Philadelphia at his mercy.

This being the *status in quo*, it was with no small feelings of relief that we were ordered to withdraw soon after nightfall. Taking up our march for the Brandywine, we crossed it the next day and occupied the precipitous northern bank, the cavalry under Maxwell doing duty as videttes to the south. Chadd's Ford was just above us, near which a line of entrenchments was thrown up, where Wayne posted his artillery.

Two miles south of us was Pyle's Ford, where General Armstrong lay with one thousand Pennsylvanians and Sullivan's division, in order that they should be able to defend the different fords above. Greene commanded the centre, which was composed of Muhlenburg's and Weedon's brigades, occupying the ground higher and slightly to the

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rear, so that the wings should not be driven in upon him.

This was our position on the night of the 10th of September, when we lay upon our arms, well knowing that the next day would prove a bloody one. General Washington's quarters lay some two miles east of the river, at Mr. Ring's house, and through the darkness I could hear Proctor's men singing, as they got their guns into position to sweep Chadd's Ford. Southeastward, across the fields, the lights of Dilworthtown gleamed murkily through the fog.

Corse, Ellis, and I were lying by our fire late that night when Colonel Hall came up to us.

"Hilton," said he, "do you know this part of the country at all?"

"Yes, sir," I replied, "some of it;" for I had ridden over this very battlefield in many a fox-hunt.

"Just the man, then," he replied. "Give over the company to your lieutenant. You must serve on the staff to-morrow."

My face fell with disappointment. Here had I been working like a dog over my men, getting them into shape, and now some one else was to lead them. But I could do nothing, so I simply said, "Very well, sir."

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The 11th of September dawned, or rather came, for it was the foggiest of foggy days.

I was attached to Sullivan's staff, and was in saddle at dawn. About daybreak Maxwell's pickets were promptly driven in by the Hessians, and so fell back before Knyphausen's brigade, which advanced very slowly, finally halting. Thereupon Maxwell, still smarting under the skirmish of two days previous, crossed the creek, opening fire all along his lines. Knyphausen, fearing an attack in force, brought his guns into action, to which Proctor replied. After a sharp musketry fire Maxwell withdrew.

Then came a scout with news from Colonel Bland, that Howe's corps had marched up stream to Jefferson's Ford. I immediately put spurs to Miss Dainty and galloped to headquarters with the news, being confirmed in my information by two officers from Ross and Hazen.

The fact being established that Howe had divided his army, we were ordered — that is, Sullivan's corps — to cross the Brandywine at the lower ford and fall upon Howe's rear-guard. Greene with twenty-five hundred men would hold Knyphausen in check, while the main army under Washington, together with Maxwell's horse, would cross, and, taking the German in flank, would drive

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him in confusion. Our division being between Howe and the German, we could attack them in detail.

We were ready to move at about noon, when suddenly a messenger came, all breathless with haste, to report that Major Spear had reconnoitred as far as Jefferson's Ford, and that Howe was nowhere in the vicinity.

"Hold your men in readiness, but do not march," came the orders to Sullivan. Spear, however, had not done his duty thoroughly. He had scouted in the direction of the Ford but not *to* it. Suddenly an old farmer on a gray mare came tearing down the road, with the news that Howe had crossed at Jefferson's Ford and was marching down the pike. Simultaneously came a note from Bland that Cornwallis was advancing in force past Mr. Osborne's house. Then there was the devil to pay.

Changing our front, we faced north, barely getting into position before the Hessians charged us. A deadly rifle-fire from the hedges and orchards, however, held them in check. Howe, east of the pike, swung his men westward, throwing a regiment of rifles into the orchards to drive us out. But the men there were old Indian fighters, and would not run a step, but lay down, two to a

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tree, one loading while the other fired. Seeing an officer fall and his men begin to waver, I ran forward and took command, and, by the way, this same rallying of beaten men is the most unpleasant duty that can fall to a staff officer. But these men were not yet beaten, I was glad to see. Suddenly De Borre's men to my right broke and ran, weakening our line so materially that Cornwallis presently crashed through our left wing as one sends a stone through a cucumber frame.

Conway, at centre, still would not retreat, but was fighting sullenly with his fighting line consisting of a single rank. But we were surrounded on three sides, and there seemed nothing else to do, so we withdrew rapidly across the fields.

I was riding, hot and breathless, around my men, trying to get them into some kind of order, cursing one, coaxing another, when a most welcome sight met my eyes.

Greene's men had heard the firing, and had double-quickened from Chadd's Ford and so met us near Dilworthtown, opened out to let us pass them and form in their rear, and then closed up in front of us. Washington and Greene were riding calmly along their lines, and the very sight of them seemed to lend confidence to the men.

Then came Cornwallis' hasty advance. Flushed

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with success, he pushed rapidly ahead, his lines in disorder. Knox's guns opened upon him, and with a long crack and roar the once lost battle again began. Three times did they advance, but no earthly troops could force that narrow defile which we defended, and every time they met with a repulse. From three o'clock till sundown we held the field, Howe and Cornwallis being powerless to drive us.

Knyphausen meanwhile, seeing Greene leave suddenly and that Wayne and Maxwell with but two thousand men opposed him, advanced with all his force, some five thousand men.

It was a gallant charge, and a still more gallant repulse. Whole platoons fell before Proctor's double-shotted guns. Then the news of Sullivan's disaster reached us, and Wayne, seeing that if he did not at once retreat Cornwallis would cut him off, sullenly withdrew.

And so ended that hard-fought battle of the Brandywine, lost, precisely as was Long Island, by sheer carelessness. Pickets posted at the different crossings would have gained the battle.

It was a bitter, bitter night for us. Twelve hundred killed and missing! And many and deep were our curses as we slowly retreated toward Philadelphia.

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Of Germantown, I have not one word to say. We fought there of course, for whatever were their failings the Delaware line was a fighting line,—fought like men, ay, and took our beating too like men, though they call it a “drawn” battle.

Then came the news of Burgoyne’s surrender, and I think for a while we were almost delirious with joy.

We were in a most sad plight, had lost most of our baggage, had no tents, no blankets, and many of us were barefooted. Yet in this impoverished condition we fought a drawn battle at Germantown, and carried on the operations on the Delaware until, winter setting in, we were compelled to withdraw.

Accordingly we went into camp at White Marsh, where but for the great bravery of a woman, Lydia Darrah of Philadelphia, we should have been annihilated.

The place where we went into temporary quarters was not by any means a pleasant one. A temporary camp never is comfortable under any circumstances, and in addition to the numberless little discomforts, such as wet quarters, no bedding, and poor food, we began to fear we should be kept permanently in camp there. Philadelphia, sixteen

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miles away, was, we knew, protected by a line of strong earthworks reaching from the Delaware River to the Schuylkill, formidable enough of themselves, without the nineteen thousand well-drilled, thoroughly equipped soldiers occupying the city. Had the officers, by whom I mean the highest in authority, General Howe, for instance, been as efficient as were the men, we should have had but a small chance of success; but Providence, always compensating, had given to this splendid army a dilatory general, fond of personal comfort and pleasure. One sees the same thing almost daily in the ordinary walks of life. Even as I write, I can see my own slaves coming in from work; if their mental condition were but equal to their physical strength they would soon attain their independence, even as we did; but they are, as Howe was, unequal to the occasion.

One evening, a very foggy, nasty evening it was, too, Colonel Hall's orderly came to me with a note, requesting me to come immediately to his quarters. "Captain Hilton," said my colonel, rising and shaking hands with me, "do you know Colonel Clarke?"

"By repute only, sir," said I, for Clarke was the chief of our spies, and though generally in the British lines, managed, in some mysterious way,

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to hold constant communication with General Washington.

"Then you know him right well," he replied, smiling, "for his reputation is above reproach. I have sent for you because I want an officer on whose sagacity and intelligence I can count." I bowed, and Colonel Hall smiled grimly. "That sounds pleasant, does it not?" he asked, laughing.

"It reminds me, sir," said I, "of the medicine my mother used to give me,—a little molasses concealing a deal of sulphur: a very nasty dose, I remember. You have given me the molasses, let me have the sulphur, sir."

"By the Lord," he replied quickly, "there may be more sulphur in it than either of us imagine. Look you, Hilton, I want some one to leave camp to-night to meet Clarke's man and get his despatches. I do not wish to give an order to that effect. I have no right to order an officer to risk his life in that way, for, if captured, he will be hung as high as Haman."

"I shall esteem it an honor, sir, if you will allow me to volunteer for this thing," said I.

"Very well, then, you shall go; and mind, Hilton, you will need all your caution. Their cavalry is out, you know. Shall you take any one with you?"

"Captain Ellicott, sir, of Smallwood's regiment."

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"It's a good thing then that there are no petticoats around," said he, meditatively, "for he has the working-plans of a very fair Don Juan in his make-up. Now, then," he went on, pulling out a map, and motioning me nearer, "you must follow this path on foot to the creek, cross that, skirt the redoubt, cross the marsh, and keep down the Edge Hill road for two miles till you come to an old mill —"

"I know it well, sir," said I.

"Well, when you get there, wait. Clarke or his agent will be there about moonrise."

"Devil a moon will there be this night, sir."

"Well, ten o'clock then. Do you understand? Good night. Report to me, of course, as soon as you return."

I went to Ellicott's tent and found him greasing a pair of boots. On hearing of my mission, he was all attention and eager to accompany me; so, stealing a pair of horseman's boots from a brother officer and taking a pair of pistols apiece, we got past our lines, crept round the redoubt, and started across the marsh. It was a very nasty path, for we had to jump from tussock to tussock, to keep out of the water, and more than once Ellicott, who was close behind me, sprang on my tussock before I left it, causing us both to slip into the mud.

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"Hurry up, Jim," I called, when I reached solid ground.

An audible curse was his reply. "Hurry up," I repeated, "and don't make so much noise. What's the matter?"

"Lost one of my boots, I mean Byrne's boots, in the mud," said he, as he came up; "it stuck in the mud and came off. Go and get it, Dick, there's a good fellow."

After a quarter of an hour's search, I found the boot, and we hurried across to the Edge Hill road and kept on toward the mill, where I was to meet Clarke.

It had been raining lightly during the afternoon, and the road was bad enough to ruin even the best temper, as we splashed steadily down it.

"I think we're a pair of fools," said Ellicott, for the tenth time, as we finally reached our destination and picked out the driest spot on a wet wall, to await our friends. Conversation was as much out of the question as we were out of temper, and I had just concluded that our errand was useless, and that we might as well return to camp, when I caught the sound of hoof-beats coming up the road, and sprang to my feet. We both walked forward, standing in the shadow of the trees. Presently a horseman approached, and after dis-

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mounting and tying his horse to a tree, took his stand near us.

"Stand here," I whispered to Ellicott. Then, walking forward, I said to the stranger, "Pray, sir, are you Colonel Clarke?" He started at the sound of my voice, and promptly covered me with his pistol. "You are my prisoner," said he. "And you," said Ellicott, coming forward, "are *my* prisoner," taking deliberate aim at him as he spoke.

By all the rules of the drama, I should have been frightened, but the rain and the general discomfort I had experienced had eliminated all such natural feelings, so I only laughed a little and replied: "It is a mutual affair, sir, you see. We are all each other's prisoners. Can we not compromise?"

"I wish you would," said Ellicott; "I feel morally certain that this pistol will go off in a moment. I don't know how you fellows feel, but I am most infernally tired. Hilton, I know you have nothing to drink, but perhaps this gentleman has. If so, this is the custom house, and I'm the collector."

The stranger dropped his pistol hand. "Yes," said he, "I have; but this is a most peculiar proceeding. Who are you, sir?"

"A tired, belated, and weary pilgrim on life's

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road," returned my friend, "seeking spiritual consolation."

"Suppose we adjourn to the mill yonder," said our new acquaintance, — which we accordingly did.

The lower story was in comparatively good repair, and we made ourselves as comfortable as was possible, the supposed Colonel Clarke producing from his pocket a piece of candle, which he lighted, and a flask, which from Ellicott's assiduous devotion to it I surmised contained brandy.

"A votre santé," said our quondam host, courteously, raising the flask to his lips. "There's plenty more where it came from," said he; "so don't stint yourselves. You know the proverb about muzzling the ox," he went on, laughing.

"May you always be as entertaining," muttered Ellicott. "You are a king's officer, of course, sir?"

"Of course I am," returned the other, frankly.

"What in the world are you doing out here then?" I asked curiously.

"Waiting for — that," said he, holding up his hand; and in the silence that ensued I heard plainly the tramp of horses and the clank of cavalry accoutrements coming up the road. Hastily cocking my pistol, I blew out the light, and

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gripping his arm whispered, "Not a word now, sir, or I will shoot you." He saw I was in earnest, and was wisely silent, for I should certainly have kept my word, having no intention of being captured. The troop, for such I judged it was, came on and clattered noisily past us up the road.

"Now, sir," said I, "though I hate to return hospitality in this manner, you must come with us, or I shall be under the painful necessity of shooting you. Will you give me your word not to attempt an escape?"

"Needs must when the devil drives," said he; "excuse the connection." Then shrugging his shoulders slightly: "I will attempt no escape, sir."

The return trip across the marsh was in no way pleasanter than the first. We were nearly an hour plodding wearily across the swamp, the wet soil sucking after us at each step. Indeed, the only thing that reconciled me to my own discomfort was an accident that happened to Ellicott. We were walking along in single file, Ellicott behind, when we came to a six-foot drain, spanned by a single rail. I got across in safety, but the rail broke beneath our prisoner, leaving Jim on the opposite side.

"You will have to jump it," I called to him; "it

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is only six feet or so." Then the moon came out from behind a cloud and showed what appeared to be a post planted in the middle of the drain, presenting a surface some twelve inches across, a good place on which to step in making the crossing.

"That's first rate," said a cheerful voice from the other side, as he buttoned up his coat, settled himself in his boots, and taking a short run, sprang upon the log, which was merely a floating stub about a foot long. Of course the moment he struck it, it glided away, and he fell on his face in the drain. The stranger and I were doubled up with laughter as we fished him out, and scraped the mud off him, he swearing steadily with an eloquence not exceeded in the days of the Pentecost. "You're a nice pair, you are!" said he, finally, and would not speak to us again.

We went straight to Colonel Hall's quarters, and found him awaiting me. "What's all this?" said he, as we entered. "Who are you, sir?" he asked of the stranger, when I had made my report.

"Lieutenant Carfuth, sir, of the 11th Hussars," said he; "I was reconnoitring the road to find out where your army lay. Like a fool I rode ahead of my troop, and—found out," he finished with a slight smile.

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Colonel Hall muttered something between his teeth, and two hours later we were turned out in force to strengthen our defences, our corps being kept under arms till daybreak. For some days after that, no further news was received of the enemy; then we suddenly received news that Howe had marched from Philadelphia with fourteen thousand men, to surprise us. His advance guard under General Grey encountered Morgan and Gist's Rifles along the Edge Hill road, and suddenly decided not to pursue its investigations, losing about a hundred men. Howe then withdrew, and lay watching us all night. On the evening of the 5th of December they withdrew, and after a second feigned attack on the seventh, left us to enjoy a well-earned rest.

Thus, thanks to the information we had received, we foiled Howe in his attempted surprise, and finally withdrew a second time and went into permanent winter-quarters at Valley Forge.

Ah, the memory of that winter at Valley Forge! — the terrible marches of the half-fed, half-naked troops; the cold so intense that it almost gripped one's very heart, freezing blood and bone and sinew, turning strong men into little children. I have seen men who would never have winced under keenest pain in ordinary circumstances, cry

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like little children in their anguish, their only food dead-horse meat or their own leather clothing; their frames and systems so impoverished by lack of food, that a scratch, which in the early days of the war would have caused merely a laugh, would produce gangrene or some terrible complication, resulting often in death.

The only quarters obtainable were rough log cabins, rudely "chinked" with mud, admitting the wind through every crack and crevice. Half of the men, at least, were insufficiently clothed, and many deaths resulted from exposure alone. I have seen men cowering over tiny fires, for wood, too, became scarce, afraid to lie upon the ground for fear of freezing, having literally not enough clothing to keep their naked flesh from the frozen ground. It is right easy now for you to sit comfortably by your fire, a glass of hot punch in your hand and a pipe between your teeth, and say comfortably: "Ah, yes, it must have been terrible!" but you may well believe it was another thing to see men with whom you have shared perils and pleasures looking with envious eyes on others who had perhaps an ounce or two of meat or flour. Even the death of an artillery-horse was hailed with delight, for that meant a dainty meal for some of us, and necessity made good foragers of all.

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I have often wondered how Madame Washington could have borne these terrible privations which she was forced to undergo. And yet with inimitable grace and courage she heartened every man who came within so much as sight of her; and when women bore it so, why should we give up? After all, it was but a choice of two evils.

The attempts made by the officers who had social aspirations, to make an impressive appearance, were often ludicrous. I remember well enough a discussion between Forsythe, who stood six feet one, and Byrnes, who was five feet six, as to which should call at headquarters, for they had but one shirt between them and there was often a lively skirmish between them, when one was attached to the staff, the other claiming that a staff appointment should be enough distinction, and that he should have the garment in question. It was finally decided by cutting it into strips and making wrist and neck ruffles of it, which struck me as somewhat similar to whitening a sepulchre.

I never shall forget serving once on the staff and seeing General Washington, with tears in his eyes, stop a young fellow named Lyons of the Jersey line, who was marching cheerfully along, barefooted, ankle deep in the snow, every step leaving blood stains behind him.

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"My poor fellow," said the general, "this is too much for you. Take this cloak of mine and cut it into moccasins."

"Not I, general," replied the gallant fellow. "You 'll need it yourself, sir, and as long as my feet bleed, why, they can't freeze;" and he laughed at his own wit.

But even now I cannot write unemotionally of that terrible time. Ill equipped as we were, the hard winter was doubly hard on us. Our commissariat under General Baron von Steuben was made as complete, perhaps I should say as little incomplete, as was possible, but was totally inadequate to the demands upon it.

Our losses too had completely disorganized us. I have seen a regiment composed of one major and two corporals, and in many regiments the number of enlisted men was far smaller than the mess-roll of the officers.

In spite of the terrible rigors of that long winter, I am proud to say that beyond grumbling, and every good soldier does that, there was no disaffection in our regiment. We were entirely free from any such display of mutinous feelings as that which the Jersey troops exhibited. Sickness broke out among us, and our artillery bid fair to be useless, owing to the loss of the horses which

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we used for food. But I think what angered us most, from Knox down to the latest recruit, was the dastardly attempt made by certain members of Congress, and Generals Lee and Conway in particular, to depose General Washington from his command.

So the winter passed. Starving, half naked, yet patiently awaiting a new crisis in our affairs, we hoped on. It was a striking example of the truth of the words of the great Frenchman, Napoleon Bonaparte, written a few years ago: "All things come to him who waits."

When spring fairly opened, the news came, how no one could tell, that General Howe was to resign command and return to England. General Sir Henry Clinton was to take command, for Howe had caused general dissatisfaction at home by his demeanor. He had spent the winter quietly in Philadelphia, leaving us unmolested at Valley Forge, but twenty miles away; had made no attempt to save Burgoyne; to be sure he had won Brandywine, but he had as by a miracle been saved from a crushing defeat at Germantown, and had spent the entire winter in idle dissipation.

One afternoon in May, just after we heard of Howe's approaching departure, Forsythe strolled into my cabin and sat down watching me, for I

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was busy scouring my equipments. I looked up and nodded. "Well, Tom, what's up?"

He took his pipe from his mouth and said, —

"Are you ripe for an adventure?"

"Why, yes, if it's not too dangerous," I replied.

"Well," said he, leaning toward me, "listen! You know on the eighteenth a large ball is to be given General Howe, and, Dick, I'm going to be there!"

I whistled.

"And I want you to go with me," he went on.

"You're a fool," said I, shortly.

"I know it," said he, with a cheerful grin. "So are you, that's why you're going with me. We can get three days' leave and go, as well as not. Of course we must don the red and white, but there's no danger in a crowd. We can get through the lines, have a good fling, and be back at the expiration of our leave, to say nothing of what we can learn of the enemy."

I looked a little dubious, but finally consented to listen to his plan, which, as he unfolded it, became more and more promising; and at last, throwing caution to the winds, I said I would go, and we set about making our preparations.



CHAPTER IX

OF course the most difficult part of our plan was to get safely within the British lines. The risk of capture we were willing to take, but not that of being executed as spies, which we might with very good reason dread.

Having obtained our leave of absence, which covered five days instead of three, as we at first proposed, we saddled our horses, and on the morning of the 15th of May rode quickly out of camp toward the south. Keeping away from the river, we pushed on as rapidly as was possible, through Hiattstown and Allentown, spent a night at Black Horse, and having assumed citizen's dress, which the tattered condition of our uniforms made more a matter of decency than of precaution, we turned westward below Red Bank, then a heap of ruins, and paused for consultation on the river bank.

"Well, Tom," said I, "here we are at the river. Now what?"

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"Get across," said he, coolly, "and ride north into Philadelphia. We can tell them we are farmers, — Heaven knows we look the character, — and spin them some fanciful yarn. Don't cross the bridge till you come to it. We can say that our stock was driven off at the battle of Brandywine, and put in a request for damages, and get out again pending an investigation."

We had some difficulty in getting across the river, but by dint of much persuasion we borrowed a boat from a farmer, — a very heavy flat-boat it was too, — and after two hours' hard work got across to the Pennsylvania side, leaving our horses with the owner of the flat-boat.

To say we were not excited would be untrue. Indeed, I swore at myself continually from the time I left camp, seeing what a fool I was to attempt the scheme. Forsythe, I began to consider crack-brained. Not a sensible word would he utter, rallying me instead on the figure we would cut in British military circles.

Late in the afternoon of Saturday the 16th, we neared the Schuylkill, and on a nearer approach were hailed by: "Halt! who goes there?" from a red-coated picket.

"It's me," said Forsythe, in a most ludicrous tone.

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I burst out laughing.

"Stop there, or I'll fire," came the reply. Then, "Who are you?"

"I tell you it's me," returned my companion, seriously. "I want to see General Howe, and I want to see him bad."

"Corporal of the guard," yelled the picket, and in a few moments we were accompanying a cavalry corporal up the road, gazing in a most unsophisticated manner at everything we saw. In spite of our position it required my greatest self-control when I saw Tom gazing open-mouthed at everything and asking our guide whether he knew General Howe well, what family he had, and whether he liked cider.

"'Cause if you do," said he, "just you tell me. I'm darned if ever I seen an Englishman as decent as you, Mister, and if I kin git in a word with the old man for ye, I'll do it. Wonder 'll he git me back my ol' blaze faced mare."

Even the grim-faced corporal had hard work to stifle a laugh as he showed us into a small brick house, beside the road, where his officer was quartered.

Then came the usual round of questions and answers, Tom telling him that we were two farmers, brothers who lived near Chadd's Ford; that at the

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battle there, two of our horses had been taken by the Hessians, and wound up by pulling from his pocket an order for £20 13s, — how obtained I could only guess, — which he handed to the officer.

He examined it carefully and said: "This appears to be written in German, sir."

"I reckon it is," said Tom. "One of them Hessians give it to me. I've forgot all the German I ever knowed."

"Signed by Captain van Zuydt," went on the other, thoughtfully. "Well, sir, you take this order and this permit, showing you are authorized to pass our lines, and report your case at headquarters."

"But, Tom," said I, as we walked up the road, "where in the world did you get that order?" But he only grinned and would give me no reply.

It had been so long since my last visit to Philadelphia that I did not fear recognition from any of my Tory acquaintances. Indeed, there was not much resemblance between the well-dressed young fellow who rode down High Street, on a trimly built bay mare, two years before and the broad-shouldered soldier who now walked down the same street.

Not caring to risk detection at the City Tavern, where we were well known, we debated long over our quarters, and finally went in at the door of a

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tavern on the corner of Little Dock and Spruce streets. It was an odd little place, the sign-board bearing the figure of a man with a woman on his back and the legend beneath, in very tipsy lettering, "The Man Loaded with Mischief," making the place remarkably appropriate, in my estimation. Having engaged rooms we set about procuring attire for Monday's fête. As for the invitations, we knew none would be needed, as our presence in the crowd would be unnoticeable.

Tom favored uniform, but on my pointing out the fact that we must go, if in uniform, in full regimentals, in which case our chance of detection was greatly enhanced, he was dissuaded, and we adopted the far safer attire of ordinary gentleman's dress, his being a pink silk coat, pearl-gray breeches, and chocolate-colored shoes with gold-plated buckles, and a very handsome dress sword, while I contented myself with a plum-colored coat, buff breeches, and black shoes with silver buckles, and a plain but handsome blade. Will it shock any of my well-to-do friends to learn that these costumes were not purchased,—for how, indeed, could two line officers in the American army manage that,—but were obtained from one of those places yclept pawn-shops, which have been so much inveighed against of late? Indeed, at the

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time of which I write, there were but two in the city. Yet so it was, and as they served my end both then and since, I will not now decry them.

Having arranged our costumes, we set about discovering what we could of the fête, and the more we learned the more we were impressed with the magnificent scale on which it was to be conducted.

Monday, the 18th of May, was the day set, and the company, it was announced, was to meet at Mr. Knight's wharf, which lay on Green Street, a thoroughfare in the Northern Liberties. From thence they were to proceed by boat to Mr. Wharton's country-place in Southwark.

Accordingly, on that afternoon at about half after three, Forsythe and I, in all the new-found glory of our fine clothes, strolled idly enough down to the place of departure. A great crowd was gathered at the wharf to watch the proceedings, and we found it difficult to force our way through the press, which was increasing every moment. Two shillings, the last I had in the world, which I thrust into the hand of one of the sailors, assisted us materially; and behold us presently seated in the stern of a wherry, gayly decorated with flags and bunting, pulling slowly

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down the stream to the music of three bands of musicians, which preceded us in flat-boats.

Houses and balconies, yes, and even roofs and trees, were filled with spectators anxious to get a glimpse of the brilliant panorama, the most brilliant that the city had ever beheld. Ladies in all the different hues of the flowers of Paradise, officers glittering in their showy uniforms, — and the uniform of Great Britain is the brightest in the world, — civilians in their parti-colored attire, and above all the sunlight, sparkling on bayonet and helmet, or thrown back from the snowy canvas of the vessels, the bright blue of the water and the green of the trees, made a sight I shall never forget.

We were formed in procession below the Swedish Church, and after landing marched through a long lane left between the ranks of the Grenadier Guards and the Light Horse battalions drawn up to receive us.

In the middle of the extensive lawn a large open area was arranged, on the edge of which two large pavilions had been erected. In the front tiers of each pavilion were seated seven young ladies attired in Turkish costumes, to our eyes most unbecoming, bearing in their turbans the favors they intended to bestow upon their

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champions, for this was to be a tournament as well as a ball.

Tom and I had pushed well to the front of the crowd, and so could get a good view of the whole affair. As we stood there chatting, the blare of a trumpet sounded, a curtain dropped, and a company dressed in the fashion of the Middle Ages, their colors scarlet and white, entered the area. They were accompanied by their esquires and by a herald, who bore amongst other insignia upon his tunic, two roses intertwined, and the words, "We droop when separated."

Following these came the Chief of the Knights, on a great bay horse. Two negro slaves in most gaudy attire, silver collars about their necks, held his stirrups, and behind him rode his esquire, bearing his lance and shield, upon which was emblazoned a Cupid astride of a lion, and the motto, "Surmounted by Love!"

"There goes Lord Cathcart," whispered a bystander in my ear. "The one behind him, his esquire, is Captain André, the fellow who paints so well and writes such good verses. They say half the women in Philadelphia are in love with him."

Behind this company came two parties of knights, the "Knights of the Blended Rose" and the

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"Knights of the Burning Mountain," with their attendants in all their splendid panoply, riding before the pavilions, — and there were some splendid horsemen there and horses too, but not one to compare with Miss Dainty, — firing their pistols, flourishing their swords, and riding tilts with each other.

When they had done enough for glory, they dismounted, and escorted the ladies to the great pavilion, in which refreshments were being served.

Tom and I mingled with the crowd, chatting here, laughing with one, exchanging a story with another, toasting a third, in short, conducting ourselves as though King George had never had more loyal subjects than ourselves. After a short sojourn in the supper room, we proceeded to the dancing hall erected for the occasion, from which the sweet strains of a minuet were floating.

Knowing no one, we stood by, idle spectators of the scene. After standing for some time near the door, tiring of being a mere on-looker at the dancing, in which I had taken no part, I turned and was about to leave the room. Suddenly a hand was laid upon my shoulder.

"Why, Exton, old fellow, how are you?" said a pleasant voice. I turned quickly, somewhat surprised. The speaker, a young fellow of some

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eight or nine and twenty, seeing his mistake, smilingly apologized, and I answering him, we stood there chatting.

"I beg your pardon, I did not catch your name, Mr. — Mr. — " said he, hesitating.

"Blake," said I, on the spur of the moment.

"Mr. Blake," he repeated; "I see you are not dancing."

"I know no one," I replied, laughing; "at least, I see no one whom I can ask."

"A fault most easily remedied," he returned; "especially as I see some of my own family opposite. I am Captain Hanson of the 23d Foot."

I bowed, murmuring my thanks, and he led me across the room. The name I was barely conscious of, but I do distinctly remember gazing for a moment into a pair of the loveliest gray eyes I ever beheld.

I murmured some platitude to her, and asked for the honor of the next dance, which was accorded me. I was never much of a dancer, but if ever I did my best to dance well it was then. When I caught sight of Tom's face I nearly burst out laughing, it was so full of ludicrous surprise.

"Oh, Mr. Blake," said my partner, "don't you think we might venture to brave Dame Pro-

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priety and go out upon the veranda for a moment ? It is so terribly warm here, and then too we can see the fireworks," for a pyrotechnic display was taking place outside.

"Why, of course we can, Miss Bingham," I replied.

"What a number of handsome women your city has," she went on.

"One cannot see stars when the sun shines," I returned with a bow.

She laughed, but indeed her judgment was correct. If Paris was perplexed at having to choose the fairest of three women, the party at Mr. Wharton's that evening would have given him a far more serious task.

There were not more than fifty Philadelphia ladies present, the rest being wives and relatives of the British officers. And indeed, those American ladies who were present, though they enjoyed themselves for that one evening, paid dearly for it thereafter, being called by their envious acquaintances "Tory" and "Loyalist" for many a day. Indeed, at the ball given the American and French officers a few years later, great pressure was required before the management would consent to invite these "Meschianza Ladies," as they were called, to be present.

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After a magnificent display of rockets, some returned to the house, to resume their dancing, and at midnight supper was announced. I say announced, but that is wrong, for as we were still dancing, the whole side of the room suddenly disappeared, and we saw instead of a blank wall a magnificent salon, over two hundred feet long. The ceiling was carved and colored to imitate light stone decorated with vines and flowers, and long rows of pier glasses reflected the lights from a score of chandeliers, so that the room seemed fairly ablaze with light. The tables were laid to seat five hundred guests, and presented a most imposing appearance beneath their load of cut glass and plate.

Seeing Miss Bingham standing perplexed in the crowd, beside an elderly lady, I pushed forward, offering my arm.

"Ha, Blake, I hope you are enjoying yourself," said a laughing voice that I discovered to be my new acquaintance.

"Exceedingly, Captain Hanson, more than I have for some time," I returned, as after being introduced in due form to the old lady, who was Miss Bingham's aunt, I seated myself next them at table.

We had been there, I suppose, an hour, and the fun was waxing fast and furious, songs and stories,

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together with shouts of laughter, mingling with the constant popping of champagne corks, when happening to look up the table, I saw on the other side, some six places above me, a face I thought I knew but could not recognize. At last it dawned on me that it was no other than my old enemy Dwining. As I looked at him he turned in my direction, and his eyes met mine. Yes, there was no doubt of it now that I caught sight of those shifting, wavering eyes. The peculiar habit he had of blinking like an owl in the daylight would have betrayed him anywhere. Fortunately he did not recognize me, owing, I suppose, to the disguise afforded by my moustache, and I comfortably turned and began a light conversation with my fair neighbor.

After supper, those who wished it, of which number Miss Bingham and I were two, returned to the pavilion for a last dance before taking our leave. On the way there we were jostled by the crowd and for a moment separated, and when I again caught sight of her, she was conversing with a tall, handsome fellow in a blue uniform, wearing a long, drooping, golden moustache, one of the handsomest men I ever saw.

"Lord Wolton," said she, easily, as I came up, "let me introduce Mr. Blake of Philadelphia."

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He bowed coldly in acknowledgment of my salute.

"A soldier?" he inquired, evidently of the lady.

"I belong to the civil party," I returned, prevaricating.

"I should think you gentlemen of Philadelphia would have the spirit to live up to your convictions," said he, coldly; "if a thing is worth having, it is worth fighting for."

"No use scuttling a sinking ship," I replied ambiguously; but like most cases where a *double entente* is used the wrong construction followed.

"The Loyalist cause, sir, is no sinking ship," he returned, half angrily. "Miss Bingham," he went on, "is not this my dance?"

"I think —" she began.

"Come," said he, offering his arm.

"Age before beauty," said I, laughing, as I offered mine.

"I promised this to Mr. Blake," she returned deprecatingly, as she took my arm.

"Never mind, sir, your turn will come," said I, rudely I fear, for I was heated with the wine I had drunk.

"Assuredly, sir," he returned composedly, "and," touching his sword-hilt significantly,

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“when it comes I shall know how to take advantage of it. Till then I can wait.”

“We have a saying at home,” I returned, “that setting hens never grow fat.” At which he seemed about to speak, changed his mind, turned abruptly, and walked away.

The dance over, I escorted my fair friend to the end of the room, where her aunt was awaiting her, and after a warm “good night” and a cordial wish, on my part at least, that we might meet again, I was taking my departure from the room, when suddenly some one came forward from the shadow and touched me on the arm.

“Is this Mr. Blake?” he asked, and turning quickly I recognized my erstwhile foe, Captain Dwining. I merely bowed, not trusting myself to speak, fearing he would recognize my voice.

“I am Captain Dwining, sir, of the Guards,” said he; “and I am come on Lord Wolton’s behalf. Of course such language as you used requires but one answer, so if you will kindly name a friend, we will proceed to the arrangement of details.”

I stared at him aghast. The possibility of my raillery leading to anything serious had never occurred to me. I had spoken the words with never a second thought, just as I would have done to Forsythe, Corse, or any of my friends.

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"Captain Dwining," said I, "I regret exceedingly that Lord Wolton should have given serious consideration to words of mine which I assure you on the honor of a gentleman were entirely innocent of any intention to offend. Kindly make this explanation to him."

"You gentlemen of peace seem to forget," said he, with a sneer, "that your words, unlike your wines and merchandise, cannot pass freely among your acquaintances. I will repeat your words to my principal, sir;" and he left me for a moment, only to return a moment later to say, —

"My principal begs, sir, that you will name your friend."

"That will do, sir," I returned quietly. "If you will come with me I will find a friend who will be only too glad to arrange the matter with you."

At the sound of my voice he looked at me attentively, as though recognizing some tone in it. I stared at him straight in the face, however, and he presently looked away. Just then I caught sight of Forsythe's figure, a few yards away.

"Oh, Tom," I called, "come here a moment. will you?" He came up to me, and stepping aside, I told him in a few words what had occurred, who Dwining was, that my *nom de guerre* was Blake, and finally introduced him to Dwining, telling

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Tom that any meeting must take place at latest by the next day, as every delay increased our risk of detection.

In a few moments he came back to me. "I have fixed it," said he. "You will meet with swords immediately — you are a far better swordsman, Dick, than you are a shot; you're vile with a pistol. Dwining will send a man with some lanterns to the big barn, which is empty, and we'll have it over in a minute." (The idea never seemed to occur to him that the affair was one which, as far as we were concerned, might require all eternity to settle.) However, I could but agree, so a few moments later we stumbled across the back lawn to a large barn, the lower floor of which was brightly lighted by four large battle-lanterns which had been borrowed from one of the battle-ships for use at the entertainment.

My opponent was walking up and down the floor when we entered, and Dwining immediately joined him, while Tom and I stood together for a moment.

"Remember, old fellow," said I, "if anything happens, get word home to my people and —"

"Nonsense," he replied quickly, in a low tone. "Listen now, and do as I tell you. If you lunge let it be upward, otherwise you lay bare your wrist

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to his point. Don't cut! Forget your sword has an edge and use it as a rapier, and above all don't try to disarm him. Your parade is n't good enough. Make it an offensive fight. Remember."

A slight delay was occasioned by the discovery that my sword was some two inches longer than his, and presently Dwining came forward with Lord Wolton's blade in his hand.

"This," said he, handing it to Tom, "is exactly the same as mine, in length, weight, and balance. My friend will use my sword, and begs that Mr. Blake will honor him by using this."

I bowed, and took it from Tom. It was a beautiful blade of fine white steel, elegantly damascened. The pommel was low and broad, and the hilts were of heavy silver, bearing the device of a grinning leopard's head and the somewhat arrogant motto: "In Potestate Dei et Nostrum."

A moment to try its balance, and a line was drawn across the floor, at which we were placed an arm's length apart.

"Are you ready, gentlemen?" from Dwining.

"Ready!" "Yes" from us.

"In guard then;" and we were eying each other sternly across the glittering lines of steel.

A quick turn of his wrist, and his point leaped forward. A still quicker parry and return thrust,

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and the infernal game began. A dozen times were our points within a short six inches of the life, but neither was touched. Parry, lunge, and parry followed quick as the eye could see, and the sparks flew from our blades as they met. Suddenly the horses in the stalls began to stamp, and their noise was intensely annoying, we needing all our attention for our lives.

At that time I knew but little of the theory of fencing. Tom had taught me a little and my father too, but nearly all I had learned by sheer necessity. A quick thrust at my face was avoided; another lightning-like stroke, and I had his point through my shoulder and lunged, remembering Forsythe's words, upward, catching him somewhere in the body. He staggered, and with a little groan fell forward on the floor, upsetting one of the lanterns. It was a terrible feeling as my sword hand struck his breast, for my sword had gone clear through him.

For a moment I stood dazed, waked by Tom.

"'T is the fortune of war," said he, coolly.

His words roused me. "Captain Dwining," said I, "I trust your friend is not seriously hurt."

"Ha!" said he, shortly; "I know you now. I thought so before, but now I know it. You shall

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not leave this place except with the Provost Marshal's men;" and he ran for the door.

I grappled with him and threw him, and with Forsythe's help overpowered him.

"Now," said I, as he lay beneath me panting, "if you will give me your word of honor to tell no one for two hours except the surgeon, we will release you. Otherwise we will have to tie you up like a bundle of wood."

He demurred a long while, but at last consented, and arranging the wounded man as best we might, we hurried from the scene, and leaving Dwining to procure a surgeon for his friend, we hastened down to the landing stage, found a boat, and pulled straight across for the Jersey shore, now a faint gray line in the early dawn.

"I say, Dick," said my companion, as we disembarked, "you've got the best of the bargain; you've carried off his sword." So it was. In the hurry of our departure I had never noticed it, but had put it in my own scabbard, and so brought it with me.

I wished afterward I had left it behind.



CHAPTER X

LEAVING the boat drawn up on the beach below the house, we hurried up through the fields and the orchard, and found the old man from whom we had borrowed the boat, and explained to him how we had borrowed a flat-boat and returned a skiff. To be truthful, he did not appear to object to the exchange, though he regarded us with some suspicion, not causelessly I am afraid, for our once elegant attire had not been improved a whit by our hard row across the river. Then, too, the blood from my wounded shoulder had run down over my shirt and coat, to the no small detriment of both. Altogether, we were not very reputable-looking objects as we cantered along the road toward the camp.

We reached our quarters after a two days' detour, not thinking it either safe or advisable to proceed directly, and were subjected to many

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curious inquiries as to the object of our absence from camp.

"I'd say it was a woman, Tom," said Major Duff with a grin, to Forsythe, "except that no self-respecting woman would have anything to do with you. That new bedraggled finery you brought in, in your saddle bags, leads me to infer that you have shot a bishop, and Hilton's sword, which by the way makes me break the Tenth Commandment, suggests a robbery. Now which is it?"

"Both," said I, and I told him of our adventures.

"Well," said he, when I had finished, "either you are two of the luckiest devils I ever ran across, which is saying a great deal, or —" and he whistled suggestively.

"Or —" I suggested.

"If you had lived in the days of Ananias you would have been taken and Ananias left," said he, successfully dodging the boot I flung at his head.

But my share of the adventure was not yet over. My wound, though slight at first, had not been improved by the hard row, and the two days' ride on top of it had played the deuce with me, so that some three days after our return to camp, I was prostrated with an attack of fever.

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At any other time, I think it would not have proved serious, but following so closely on the winter, with the terrible privations we had been forced to undergo, it was not so very strange that I should be brought pretty nigh death's door. At any rate so it was, and for many days my life was despaired of. Indeed, I afterwards learned that several times the doctors said I could not possibly live; but so great is the perversity of Fate that I did live, and, moreover, two years ago attended the funeral of one of those very surgeons.

One morning, after I was strong enough to sit up, Forsythe and Colonel Hall came into the room in the farmhouse where I was lying. After congratulating me upon my improved appearance, my colonel said: —

“Hilton, you'd better go home, boy, and get nursed back to strength there. Your people will be overjoyed to see you, and so, perhaps, will some one else,” and he winked knowingly. “I'll get you a month's leave, and you can come back as soon as you are strong enough. If a month is not enough, let me know, and it shall be extended. You had better go by boat, and, Mr. Forsythe,” turning to my friend, “you might as well go too, and see that he gets safe home.”

I thanked him for his kindness, but he cut me

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short with, "Nonsense, boy! I won't see a good weapon spoiled by the weather, when it is in my power to save it. Now mind, you two, no more private escapades; or by the Lord, I'll make you dance to livelier music than ever you heard at the Meschianza;" and once more bidding me farewell, he strode out, leaving us laughing at his last remark.

Weak as I was, I thoroughly enjoyed the sail down the river. The wind held fair from the east, so it was an easy run with a loose sheet and an eased boom, taking us just a day and a half before we sighted the little clump of roofs and tree-tops in the bight of the Horse-Shoe Cove.

It was late in the evening when we pulled our boat up on the gravelled beach before the town. So making her fast for the night, I called a man I saw near, bade him carry our sails up to the tavern, and taking Tom's arm, I proceeded slowly in that direction.

Stumbling noisily up the steps, still clinging to Forsythe's arm, I knocked heavily, and presently the door was flung violently open and the inn-keeper's wife appeared.

"Who's that, come here this time o' — God save us, it's Mr. Hilton!"

The last was a scream, and the good woman,

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who had known me from childhood, actually threw her arms about my neck and kissed me.

"Yes, Mrs. Johnstone, it is I, safe enough, but not very sound. I've come home to be nursed."

"And I think," she remarked slyly, "I know a young lady who'll want that same job of nursing. Eh, Mr. Dick! Ah, but you're a sly one, but you can't shut an old woman's eyes."

"Nor her mouth either," I thought to myself as I asked if we could get a room.

"A room? Of course you can. You can have the whole house, if you want it," she replied, and presently she showed us to our apartments.

"By the way, Mrs. Johnstone, will you send a man out home — Never mind, though! Tell Jim to have a couple of horses for us, and we'll ride out after breakfast."

"Indeed, then, you won't," she replied quickly. "You'll sleep a good nine hours, and then drive quietly out in the old coach. Do you think after what you were to Will —" (her son, who had served in my company and who had been killed at Germantown, and to whom I had been of some slight service), "that I'm going to let your mother's son run any such risk as that! Not by a jugful." With which piece of parting slang, she left us and ran noisily down the stairs, while we tumbled into

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bed to enjoy the nine hours' sleep she had suggested.

The next morning, soon after we had breakfasted, the coach, a great roomy affair big enough for ten, drew up before the door, and we drove slowly out along the pike toward my home.

It was about their breakfast hour, and as the day was warm, the windows were open and the rumble of the wheels floated in at the open casements. I could see my mother and Bess, standing at the window looking wonderingly down the lane at us, and my father's tall figure in the background. Then I leaned forward, half out of the coach window, and was recognized, and so came down to be welcomed as only one's own home can welcome one. I introduced Forsythe to them all, and was greatly pleased to see how wholly he was included in my home-coming. Indeed I should have been greatly surprised had it been otherwise, for we Delawareans are a hospitable people, or were in those days, and my friend's friend is as welcome at my home as ever my friend himself.

I now began to regret that I had not gone to see Kitty the moment I returned, for the doctor and my family would not hear of my even leaving the house, to say nothing of attempting a ride. Even as it was, careful as I was of myself, an evening

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on the lawn with Bess and Forsythe brought on a return of my fever, and for a long time my life was not worth a moment's purchase.

I do not remember much of that illness, the most salient point of the whole affair being a golden-haired vision that was constantly in the room, now laying wet towels on my head, now sitting by me holding my hand. Only toward the last of my illness did I recognize her.

"Why, Kitty, darling!" I exclaimed in glad surprise, as she came into the room with some broth for me one afternoon. "Is it really you, or—" but down went broth and tray and everything, and the next moment my sweetheart's lovely flushed face was buried in the pillows next to mine, and she was sobbing as though her heart were breaking.

"Why, Kit! sweetheart," said I, smoothing the wealth of sun-bright hair, "don't cry, dearest. There is nothing worth even a single tear from you."

"They told me you would d—d—die," she sobbed; and then, in a sudden access of tenderness, she slipped her arm about my neck and kissed me.

Just then the door opened quietly and my mother came in. "Oh," she said, then burst out laughing,

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and walking up to my sweetheart, who was blushing brightly, she took her in her arms and kissed her, saying, —

“Kitty dear, there is no need of my welcoming you. Dick has done that so well, but — I am so glad, my dear, so truly glad ;” and they both fell to crying, and I, a silent spectator, lay upon my couch and laughed and chuckled like an idiot.

The first days of my convalescence passed rapidly, and to my great joy I found I was regaining my strength much more rapidly than I had any right to expect. One afternoon, after I was nearly recovered, I was lying on a low couch in my room : my mother and Kitty had been with me helping to kill the dull hours, always duller on a sick-bed. Presently my mother went out, and Kitty, drawing a chair nearer me, made me tell her all I could of my adventures, especially the Wharton fête and the dresses of the ladies, Miss Bingham in particular. Was she young? Was she pretty? What did she wear? What did we talk about? and such questions.

“Apropos, dearest,” said I, “I have brought away a memento of the Meschianza that I wish I did not have,” and I told her of the duel, of the result, and of my wound, which was primarily the cause of my illness.

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She took me to task in her pretty winning way, saying I had no right to jeopardize my life, which now was hers — as though it had not always been.

“It has pained me greatly, dear,” I went on, “to think that words uttered in boyish folly, and God knows I did not mean them, should have made me responsible for so serious a thing as a man’s life. Get me the sword, will you, darling? ’Tis in the closet yonder, wrapped in my cavalry cloak.”

She brought me the bundle, and I took it, making of it an excuse to kiss her hand.

“Isn’t it a beauty, Kit?” said I, unwrapping the blade and handing it to her.

She took it, and for a moment I lay there admiring the charming picture she presented, with the brilliant sunlight streaming in on the gold of her hair, and the glittering line of steel she swung so idly to and fro.

“His arms are on the hilt,” said I.

“Oh!” she said, and I heard the blade fall with a sudden ring and clatter to the floor, and I looked up, to find her staring at me, her eyes wide open, her face as white as death. She was trembling, too, in every limb.

“Why, Kitty —” I began.

But she only looked at me, and pointing to the sword upon the floor said merely, —

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"Whose is it?"

"Why, his — my opponent's," said I.

"Ah, no, Dick! Not that! As you love God, Dick, not that!" and she began to cry miserably.

"Kitty," said I, "are you ill, darling? What ails you? What is it, sweetheart?" and I sprang to my feet and walked toward her.

She motioned me away.

"Oh, Dick! Dick! Dick! Don't you see? Don't you know the arms and the motto? 'T is Frank's! My brother's. The leopard's head is the Caverton crest."

"Good God!" said I, as the whole miserable thing came to me. What had I done? Ten words, uttered in idle raillery, to change my life so, to rob me of — It should not be, I swore to myself as I faced her. Though Heaven itself were against me, it should not be!

"Tell me you were joking, Dick. That you found the sword, or it was given you," she pleaded, her eyes anxiously upon my face.

I shook my head sadly, for I could say nothing.

"Oh, Dick! Don't you see what it means? It means that — that — we must —"

"That I must love you all the more, darling," said I, trying to take her in my arms. But she would not, and motioned me away.

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"Though I loved you as much again, Dick, as I do, and Heaven knows how impossible that would be, I can never marry you now, for you — you — killed —"

"But you never even saw him," I broke in. "Ah, Kit! don't break my heart by saying that!"

"It must be," she said quietly, with a great sob. "Oh, Dick, kiss me and let me go. I cannot, cannot bear it!" and she burst into an agony of weeping and left me.

And I, how can I say what I felt as I stormed angrily up and down the room? I did not yet half realize it, but presently as the twilight came, a great quiet stole over me, and I saw then that — God! How could I look forward to the long years of the dreary, dreary future? — years of agony and ceaseless, hopeless longings. Why had fate come so heavily upon me? Why was it that throughout the long campaigns I had been preserved, as we used to pray in the old church when I was a boy, "from sudden death, Good Lord, deliver us"? Baker was gone, and Thompson and Haslet too — better men than I in every way, yet they were taken when their work was not a quarter done, and I left. Ah, the injustice of it all! And I uttered unmanly curses as I swung up and down the little

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room, and presently flung myself upon the bed and lay there like a stone.

A light step in the hall, a tap upon the door, and my mother came in. Kitty, she said, had told her all, and down she sat upon the bed beside me, and presently my head was in her lap, and the next moment she was weeping over me.

As for me, I could not say a word for a moment, then —

“Mother!”

“Richard! My son!”

And then, I too was sobbing like a great grown baby.

“It is all for the best, my son. God knows best. You can trust Him,” she said presently.

“I can trust no one,” said I, bitterly, “neither God nor myself, — least of all myself. Mother! mother, what can I have done that this terrible thing should happen?”

“I fear —” she began. “Oh, Dick, Dick! Why were you ever coward enough to fight that duel? For it was a coward’s part.”

“Coward?” said I, “coward? We went out a thousand, mother, and we came back eighty-nine, and you talk to me of cowardice!”

“Not that,” she said, “not that! I mean a moral coward! You talk to me of honor! See

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now what honor has done for you. Will honor — ” and she again began to sob.

“ Oh, mother, mother, when I ask for bread do not give me a stone,” and I began again to tramp the floor. “ Please leave me now and tell Tom to come to me. I must see him and talk it over.”

But Tom was nowhere to be found, and late that evening I received a note from Kitty. It had no beginning, merely reading : —

“ The enclosure shows how terribly right were my surmises. God help us both, if it be possible ! ” The enclosure took me longer to decipher. It read so : —

MISTRESS KITTY WESTON,

Province of De la Ware.

These being come to your hand will tell you what the writer regrets to say : That on the 18th of May Francis Caverton, Lord Wolton, in the course of an affair of honor, received a dangerous wound, from which he is like to die, — if indeed that be not come to pass already. Further, I grieve to say that the brother met his death by the hand of a friend of the sister, a certain Captain Hilton, of the Rebel forces. Any commands Mistress Weston will be pleased to lay upon the writer will be esteemed a pleasure by

Her ever obedient servant,

EDWARD DWINING.

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When Tom came in, I showed him the two notes and told him all. He was not at all responsive, smoking quietly, and merely saying, —

“Go to Philadelphia and find out this man Dwining. His writing to the girl and not to her father makes it look as though he takes a malicious pleasure in the announcement. We ’ll go to Philadelphia when you are well. Can you ride yet?”

“Yes, of course, in such a cause.”

“Good! Then we ’ll go to-morrow.”

“No,” said I, shortly, “we ’ll go to-night;” and giving the order for the horses, I went to my room, got what I wanted, picked up my sword, that now I had grown to hate, and running down the stairs I met Tom, who was saying good-bye to Bess, in the hall below; and after a hasty supper and a hastier farewell we mounted and rode quickly down the lane.



CHAPTER XI

THE sun was setting when we left, and the horses went well in the cool twilight. For hours it seemed we rode, with never a sound to break the quiet save the heavy tramp and swing of the horses and the click-click of the bits, swinging as the horses reached forward in their stride. Presently the moon came up, a great red ball over the Jersey shore, showing the trees and woods, outlined against it hard as iron. Still we rode on, never drawing rein save for a moment's trot to breathe our mounts, then breaking into that long, swinging stride again, that covered the ground so famously.

"This is madness," said Tom, presently, with an oath, pulling his horse up short. "Pull up, man, pull up! Slacken your pace a bit! Yonder are the lights of Chester, and we've done eighteen miles in a little over two hours. If you want to

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get on to-morrow with that horse, you must set an easier pace."

My horse indeed was badly blown by the long, hard gallop, due to my thoughtlessness. That he had neither the speed nor the bottom of Miss Dainty, I realized as I saw his heaving, throbbing flanks, every heart-beat racking him to and fro. So we pulled up, and at an easier pace rode up to the tavern, saw our horses put up, and then betook ourselves to our quarters for the night.

"Look here, Dick," said my friend, giving me a little shake, as I sat at the table, my head upon my arms, "what are your plans? There was no need for our riding as we did to-night, and I only did so because I knew it would ease your excitement. What are you going to do?"

"I don't know — yet," said I, stupidly, for the whole horrid affair was as yet unreal to me.

"Well, wake up, man, and find out! Don't be a baby, be a man. We must find Dwining or Caverton."

"Caverton's dead," said I, shortly.

"Dead! Not a bit of it! But Dwining is our man. Look here, Dick, was he in love with Miss Weston?"

"I suppose so," said I; "I don't see how he could help it."

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“Humph!” said he, shortly. “Well, I’ll bet the cat jumped that way. As I said, we must discover his whereabouts.”

“If ever I find him,” I began, “and get him within sword sweep —”

“Now look here, Dick,” said he, shortly; “you go to bed, I want to think.”

I was too dead tired to resist much, and in a few moments I was sound asleep.

We were astir early the next morning, and shortly after sunrise were trotting steadily toward Philadelphia. It was the morning of the 18th of June. No news had come to us from the front, and in addition to my own private trouble, which now took precedence over any other, we began to discuss the likelihood of an active campaign. In February last, our absolute independence had been recognized by the French nation, which was indeed the breath of life to us, and now Tom was about to leave me, when we had cleared up my own trouble as best we could. Indeed, though I urged him to do so, he declined leaving me until then.

Stopping once or twice on the road, first for breakfast, then to water our horses, we were riding easily along a bit of well-wooded road when the quick tramp of a galloping horse came to our ears, and we drew up short.

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A man was riding down the road, speeding at an easy canter. He slackened his pace as he came up to us and called out, —

“Good-morning, gentlemen! For which side, pray?”

“The right side, sir,” said Tom, shortly.

“And that is —”

“None of your business, my good sir.”

“All right, sir! All right! No offence meant, and none taken, I hope. But I’ll give you a bit of news in exchange for your civility. Clinton has evacuated Philadelphia.”

“What!” said both of us, almost in a shout. “How? When? Where has he gone?”

“Easy, gentlemen, easy! I might reply by using your own words and say, ‘None of your business;’ but I’ll tell you. They were marching out of the city when I left, will cross at Coryell’s Ferry, and so on to New York by way of Haddonfield. The German regiments left by ship last night.”

Though the news should have elated me, I was much cast down by it, for now I could see no prospect of finding the men I wanted. My course was very plain. I would resign, and then failing to find Caverton or Dwining, I could re-enlist and fight in the ranks, where, indeed, were better men than I.

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So resolving, we bade our informant good-bye with a wave of the hand, and once more put spurs to our horses.

When we reached Philadelphia, the city was in a turmoil of excitement. Crowds thronged the streets, bells rang, guns fired, and a great profusion of flags and bunting showed how glad the people were to be rid of the invaders, though I am bound to say that they had treated the inhabitants with every courtesy it was in their power to show.

A terrible march Clinton's army had on those hot June days along the still hotter Jersey roads, with Morgan's Rifles on its flanks, and Maxwell, Dickinson, and Cadwallader hanging on the rear, cutting off foraging parties and plundering their wagon trains.

But it was not with them I had to deal, and I was not a little worried as I rode into the yard of the City Tavern.

"Why, 'tis Mr. Hilton, is it not, sir?" said the host, as I entered the room.

"Yes," said I, as I shook his hand and made some inquiries as to who was in the house.

"And the British?" said I, when he had answered my questions.

"Gone, sir! All gone, thank God, barring a few

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sick and wounded who were left under flag of truce."

"Where are they?" I asked.

"In the lobbies of the State House, sir. They used it as a hospital."

Telling Tom what I had heard, we walked down to the State House and found it, as I had been informed, a hospital. Asking for the officer in charge I was shown into a little room and asked to wait. Presently as I sat there I heard some one call out in a surprised tone, —

"Hilton! Hilton, by all that's lucky! How are you, my boy?" and I started up to shake by the hand Ferris, one of the British officers with whom I had dined when I was prisoner in Trenton.

I greeted him warmly, for I was glad to see him.

"You look ill, Hilton," said he; "have you been so?"

"Fever," said I, and in a few words I told him of the cause of it, the Meschianza, the duel, and a broad enough hint of my private difficulty to make him understand how serious it was.

"Lord Wolton," said he, surprised; "why, he is one of 'Ours.'"

"Yes," said I, "I knew Caverton was one of your mess, but I never knew till yesterday that

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Caverton was Lord Wolton. Where is he now, Ferris?"

"The Lord knows!" he returned; "and I suspect Ned Dwining knows too. I don't think Caverton's dead,—certainly not unless he died within the past week. The affair, you must know, created quite a furore, happening as it did at such a time and place. Dwining was put under arrest. I feel very sorry for him."

"Why?" said I.

"Well," he returned, "he was a good soldier while with us, and —"

"While with you?" I began.

"Yes," said he; "he's gone over to your forces now, my boy."

I sat down and stared at him in disbelief. "Joined us?" said I, in amazement.

"Oh, it's a perfect little idyl of sentiment!" said he, bitterly. "Dwining, you know, is a near relative of mine, which accounts for the pleasure it gives me to tell you this. It is so pleasant to parade one's own dishonor."

I sprang to my feet. "Pardon me," said I, quickly; "but no action of Dwining or any one can in the least stain your honor, Ferris."

"Spoken like a friend," said he, as I gripped his hand: "only, Hilton, I hope you will never

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have to undergo such an ordeal as I go through at every mess-dinner. To feel that your own cousin has deliberately dishonored the cloth you both wear makes one ashamed to face even his friends. Dwining, as you know, was taken prisoner by your army at White Plains, and one of your officers, most kindly for him at least, sent him to his own home on parole, while recovering from a wound he had received. Dwining was never a very popular fellow; he had served a long time in India, and a certain laxity of morals, together with a decided tendency toward inflicting cruel and undeserved punishment upon his men, made him heartily hated by the rank and file, and rather avoided too by his brother officers. But we all respected him as a good soldier who knew and did his duty, quick at quarrelling, but always seeking active service. This being the case, imagine how great was our surprise shortly after his exchange last March, when he immediately resigned, saying that things he had seen while a prisoner awakened conscientious scruples, and he would fight no more. Now the idea of Dwining with conscientious scruples was enough to set us all laughing; but it was partially explained when a rumor came to us, how I never could tell, that his dereliction was owing to a woman. It would have been bad enough had

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he merely exchanged or resigned and gone home, but this shameful desertion —" and he walked uneasily up and down the room.

"Look here, Captain Ferris," put in Forsythe, "I don't think Hilton has been quite plain enough with you. He is asking about your man because Dwining was Lord Wolton's second, in that wretched duel. As Hilton severely wounded his opponent, or, as he thinks, killed him, and as he has since discovered Wolton to be the brother of his fiancée, he is naturally anxious as to his whereabouts and condition."

"Why in Heaven's name did you not tell me that before?" said Ferris, with open eyes.

"I thought I did," I replied.

"Well, you did n't! I don't know where Wolton is, but Dwining, I hear, mind it is but report, is serving with Cadwallader's troops, following up our army across the Jerseys. I heard it not an hour ago. What? Going? Well, good-bye and good luck — *Au revoir!*" he shouted as we left the room.

We got an exchange of horses, left the city, and crossing the river at Coryell's Ferry, where our forces had crossed in pursuit that very morning, we pushed as fast as we dared along the road to Haddonfield.

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I have often wondered in the course of my life at the marvellous way in which the truth of the saying, "Nothing happens but the unexpected," is shown. So surely as we coolly plan and calculate a thing, I mean of course that in which our wishes only and not our actual powers can enter, so surely does that thing not come to pass. But go in, in a hit or miss, devil-may-care way, or better still, take a pessimistic view of the affair, and nine times out of ten what you desire will come to pass.

Witness the truth of this: here had I for three days been worrying myself nearly into a fever over the question of how to find the men I wanted. It was a Herculean task, and one of which, taking everything into consideration, I might well despair.

"Dick," said Tom to me, "I reckon we'd better ride over there," pointing to a little cluster of roofs and spires half hid among the trees, "and get something to eat. 'A stern chase is a long chase,' proverbially, and the Lord knows when we 'll get another chance to eat."

I agreed, and we rode leisurely enough over to the village, and dismounting called for what refreshments the solitary inn could provide. It was not much, a solitary chicken and a pint bottle of

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poor sherry, together with some bread and potatoes; but such as it was, it was most welcome.

We were in the midst of our repast when loud voices raised in altercation in the yard outside interrupted us, then the stamp of many feet and the confused murmuring of a gathering crowd.

"I tell you it is," said a voice of that peculiar timbre that one involuntarily desires to contradict. "I seen him before. He's a spy, that's what he is."

I rose and went to the window. A single horseman was dismounting in the corner of the yard, eyed eagerly by some twenty or more men who were gathering about the gate.

He was evidently the object of their discussion, and he knew it. The crowd by this time had grown larger and bolder; but mob-like, lost without leaders, they hesitated, one or two, secure in the rear, throwing stones at the horseman.

I could not but admire the man's nerve. To reach the inn door he must pass within a few feet of the crowd, several men indeed standing on the very steps he had to mount. He never hesitated, however, but giving his belt a quiet pull to bring his sword-hilt to the front, he strode quietly forward, pushed two men who impeded him, off the steps like so many logs of wood, and walking quietly

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into the room in which we were sitting, he seated himself at a table, and throwing off his hat exposed to my gaze the face of the very man I wished to see, — Dwining himself.

Involuntarily I rose to my feet, pushing back my chair. The noise startled him, and he looked up, recognized me, swore a great oath, and then he too sprang to his feet.

“Cap — ” I began. But my words were lost in the roar of voices outside, “Hang him! Hang him! Hang the spy!”

“Go to the front door, Tom, and hold them for a moment. Explain to them! Lie to them! Anything! I’ll be with you in a moment,” I cried, as my friend picked up his sword and slipped out into the hall.

“Captain Dwining,” said I, sternly, “before any private conversation, tell me, on your honor, are those men wrong in their suspicions?” and I pointed to the men outside.

“I am no spy, sir,” said he, shortly. “Why do you ask?”

“Because, sir, I think as things are now, we three can stand them off. Were you a spy, I should make no cause with you, but — ” A shout outside, where Forsythe held the door, drew our attention.

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"Just one word, sir," I shouted in his ear as we ran into the hall, and, the three of us now, ranged ourselves across the head of the stairs. "Is Lord Wolton living?"

"Yes," said he, shortly; "living, but —" The rush of the mob up the stair cut him short.

"But what?" I could not help wondering. "Living, but like to die no doubt;" and my desperation lent strength to a blow I just then gave one villainous face with my sword-hilt, for I did not wish to kill. Forsythe and Dwining had no such scruples, as three men bleeding profusely testified.

For a half hour we battled successfully against them there upon the stair. In spite of our superior position, we must inevitably have been taken, when, to our intense surprise, the crowd broke and ran. Unable to account for this hurried flight, I ran down upon the porch, and found there a detachment of our cavalry, which had just galloped into the town.

I asked who was in command.

"Lieutenant Wilson, sir, of Maxwell's cavalry," said a young officer, who was mounted on a very handsome black horse; "and whom have I the pleasure of addressing?"

"Captain Hilton of the Delaware Regiment, as well as Captain Dwining and Mr. Forsythe," I

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replied. "I wish to thank you, sir, for relieving us from what would certainly have proved a most unpleasant predicament."

"So I should imagine," he returned, laughing. "As we are merely on our way to the rear, we are in no hurry. Still we may as well push on when we have watered our horses. You had better ride with us, captain. I shall be glad of your company."

Thanking him for his offer, I rejoined my party and told them my plans. But Forsythe would not go with me. He would go back to the front now and join his company, for his leave was nearly up.

"Captain Dwining," said I, turning to the other, "will you kindly answer now the question I asked a while since? Is Lord Wolton living?"

"Yes," said he, tersely; "gone to England."

"Then why, may I ask, did you write the note you did to Miss Weston, worrying her nearly sick over the supposed death of her brother?"

"Your question, sir, savors somewhat of impertinence," said he. "By what right do you inquire?"

"As the future husband of the lady, sir," I replied gravely.

I thought for a moment, perhaps indeed it was but a thought, that his mouth twitched a little under the heavy moustache. I know he whitened.

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"Pardon me. I had no idea of that. Pray accept my congratulations. To answer your question, I thought at the time her brother would die."

"What good was there in mentioning his opponent's name?" I asked.

He colored deeply, as he answered slowly, "I thought it best."

"Captain Dwining," said I, "I am going to do an unusual thing. We have been enemies, you and I, and yet I wish you to do something for me. Will you write a note to Miss Weston, telling her of her brother's recovery? I ask it more for her sake than my own."

"I will do better than that," said he; "I will go with you to your home and tell her in person."

I protested against his taking such a long trip.

"No," said he, "I shall like it. I wish to say farewell to some of my friends there before I leave for England."

"For England?" said I, surprised. "I thought you were for us, captain."

For a moment he looked as though he would have liked to strike me, then he said quietly: "No. It was impossible," and he would say no more.

We rode west that evening to Philadelphia, and the next day, leaving our horses at a tavern, we took boat for my home.

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During the quiet sail down the river I began to wonder at the death of my recent anger toward my companion. Perhaps, I cannot say surely, it was the fact that he was about to be instrumental in dispelling the blackest cloud that I had ever known, that made me look on him, first with toleration, then with a sort of ill-defined liking.

"Do you know," said I, as we floated easily down the river on the ebbing tide, "I ought to hate you, Dwining — you called me coward once."

"Then," said he, quickly, "I apologize from my heart, Hilton. Enemies though we are, we can honor each other's virtues. It was a rank injustice, for which I desire to make amends," and he stretched out his hand to me.

Toward evening, our destination, half hidden in the trees, came in sight, and we were quietly put ashore; and waving good-bye to the good-natured skipper of the little schooner, we picked our way from among the boats and litter on the beach up to the streets of the little town.



CHAPTER XII

DWINING had what little baggage he had with him carried up to the inn, as he proposed to catch here the first vessel down the river bound for any European port. I had no intention of going home until I had settled once and for all that, to me, all important question, and now Fate was running my way at last.

It was with great relief and very different feelings from those I entertained a short eight days before, that I now entered the tavern and saw our *impedimenta* carried to the room above.

"Hilton," said Dwining, "I wish you'd ask them to signal the first outbound vessel."

I turned to the inn-keeper, who stood near. "Johnstone," said I, "I wish you would find out from the fishermen when the first outward bound ship for Europe heaves in sight," — for in those days most vessels watered at the place.

"Why, sir!" said he, in surprise, "there's a gentleman here now, at least he's out at present,

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who said only two hours ago that he wanted his luggage put on board the 'Roebuck' going down stream on the next ebb."

I gave an exclamation of surprise. "When is that?" I asked.

"About two o'clock in the morning, sir," he replied.

"Then, Dwining," said I, "you're in luck. I won't ask you to stay. I know how painful it would be for you, but —"

"Suppose we walk over to Mr. Weston's and arrange your little difficulty," said he, interrupting me; and seeking our hats we left the inn and turned out upon the now silent street.

It was past nine o'clock, and the streets were entirely deserted and dark too, save for an occasional gleam from a loose-fitting shutter. Knowing the habits of my town people, it was with great surprise that I saw bright lights gleaming in the open casements in all the windows of the lower story of the Weston house. Wondering what the meaning of this illumination could possibly be, we walked up and knocked at the open door. Mr. Weston himself appeared in answer to my summons, and seeing who it was, he fairly pulled me into the hall, Dwining following.

"Why, Dick! Dick Hilton! Why do you stand

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there and knock like any stranger? You should know your way right well between these walls. Welcome, lad, welcome, and you too, Captain Dwining." Then raising his voice he called, "Kitty."

A light step answered his call, and I, who had been, I thought, comparatively cool, began to tremble as though with a sudden chill, something I had never done before, not even in my first battle. Then she came into the hall and stood for a moment with the soft candle-light streaming bravely over her wealth of golden hair, the fairest sight surely that the gods could have devised. In the presence of the others I should have known better than to do as I did, for I simply held out my arms, and she —

"Ah, Dick! Dear Dick!" she said, as soon as our first greetings were over; "come into the drawing-room. I —"

"Dearest," said I, "I want to tell you that we were all wrong, and that your brother Frank is safe and sound. Captain Dwining —"

"Come!" said my sweetheart, imperiously, pulling me forward through the open door.

I followed her obediently, and there — Surely it could not be! Were my eyes deceiving me, or was it really —

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"Now," said Kitty, triumphantly, "shake hands, you two," — pulling the stranger forward. "What is the matter, Dick?" For I really saw before me Lord Wolton, whom I had the misfortune to wound two months before.

"Egad! Captain Hilton," said he, cordially, holding out his hand, "you need not look so surprised. You surely did not think you had done for me. That I had lived through the fevers of India only to die in a — in a barn," he finished lamely, for I think he saw the tears that were in my eyes.

"I am only too glad, my Lord," I began.

"My Lord!" said he, in a surprised tone. "Look here, Hilton, don't you know that if your people gain their independence, and as God is my judge I think they will, you will have no titles. So you had best begin with me as plain Frank Caverton. Especially as my little sister yonder tells me — Hello, Dwining," he broke off, seeing his former comrade enter the room.

"Why, Caverton, old fellow, how are you?" But I noticed that Dwining never offered to shake hands with the other. Caverton, too, noticed it, for he came out with —

"What 's the matter with you, Ned?"

"Just this," returned the other, as Mr. Weston

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left the room, "I've got something to say to you, and I won't shake hands with you until I have said it."

"All right," said Caverton, shortly. "Heave ahead! Has your father gone to bed, Kitty?"

"I'll see," she replied, rising to leave the room. Dwining stretched out his hand. "No," said he, "please wait. I want you, too, to hear it and Hilton, also. I leave to-night, and shall not return, and—" He stopped as she sat down, but presently went on, turning to me.

"Do you remember our first meeting, Hilton?"

I nodded.

"Did it ever occur to you that my rudeness and deliberate insult to you then was not my natural impulse, but was — well, the result of — of — call it envy — jealousy, if you like?"

At this, Kit turned rosy red, and I sat staring at him.

"Oh," said he, a little bitterly, "I must not make my story over long. Let it suffice you to know, that when I came to this place a prisoner, I met and — and — fell in love with —" he nodded at Kitty, and did not finish his sentence. "There was no chance for me, of course. She told me that, and when I pressed for reasons, said that even were her affections disengaged, she could

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never care for one who fought against her principles, but that — ”

“ Turned recruiting sergeant, eh, Kitty ? ” said Caverton, with a grin.

“ I did n't,” said my sweetheart, furiously ; and with a little stamp of her foot, she dodged me, for I tried to catch her in her retreat, and ran out of the room.

We all felt relieved by her departure, and Dwining went on, —

“ I don't suppose you can understand, Caverton, how I felt the thing, but Hilton, there, can. It was the only thing that mattered. It was all the world to me, and to my shame, be it confessed, it became more to me, almost, than my honor. I always had, as you, Caverton, will remember, serious doubts as to the justice of this war, and while I was a prisoner here, I decided that when I was exchanged I would resign. Then I think the devil tempted me, and whispered, ‘ Why not go a step further ? If it is wrong to fight against them, surely it is right to aid them,’ and I began to seriously entertain the idea. Then came that accursed Meschianza. Do you know, Caverton, that your wound was all my fault ? ”

“ How ? ” asked Caverton.

“ Hilton sent you a satisfactory message,” re-

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turned the other, bravely, "which I did not give you. It was unintentional on my part, but I could not foresee the consequences. I wanted you two to fight. I knew your skill with the sword, but did not know Hilton's, and thought — God forgive me! — to —"

Caverton swore a great oath and sprang to his feet, half drawing his sword. Then driving it heavily home into the sheath, he sat down and glared at Dwining, who was very pale, but nevertheless returned the look steadily.

"Yes," he went on, with a nod of his head and an odd light in his eyes. "Then I wrote that note, Hilton, that you know of, and I think that is nearly all, except that I tried to enlist with Cadwallader, but could not."

"Why not?" asked Caverton, coldly.

"I have done many things," said the other, slowly, "that I have since regretted, but none more than this. My honor as a man may have suffered, but by God! my honor as a soldier no man shall impeach," and he strode quickly up and down the floor.

"And now," said he, quietly, "if either of you think you have cause for offence or wish satisfaction for wrongs done you, why, all that I can say is, that I have a sword yet and a life to which

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you are either of you welcome. Now, you know, Caverton, why I didn't offer you my hand."

I turned and looked at Caverton. He was looking intently at Dwining, his brows drawn down, and he was chewing his moustache.

He stepped forward quickly, and looking at me, said, —

"Ned, I speak both for Hilton and myself in saying that bygones shall be bygones, if you will have it so; and that you and I have been mess-mates too long together, Ned, to let a single slip come between us. Why, maybe the same thing will happen to me to-morrow. And I've no doubt in the world that had I been tempted so, I'd have gone under," and he stretched out his hand.

"What do you say, Hilton?" asked Dwining.

"I go with Caverton," said I, as I gripped his hand.

He did not speak for a moment, but stood and looked at us, with an odd gleam in his dark eyes.

"Well," he said at last, "you're two pretty good fellows, you are. But you won't regret it;" and he fell to smoking vigorously.

Wishing to respect his feelings, Caverton and I began a lively conversation, but the clock striking one soon roused us, and presently a heavy knock at the door brought us to a realization of the hour.

In Buff and Blue

“‘Roebuck’ ’s in sight, sir,” said a deep voice from the street, “and the baggage is down on the beach.”

I called Kitty, who announced her intention of going with us to the boat, and together with her father, we walked down to the river-front.

It was very dark on the water, a clear starlit night overhead, which makes the water present the very vaguest appearance, now up, now down, not black but infinitely more deceptive. The wind was blowing heavily from the east, which, together with the trembling radiance of the stars, promised stormy weather for the morrow.

The “Roebuck,” a large vessel, barque-rigged, lay well out in the stream, riding to a single anchor; one could tell that by the uneasy way she swung in the tide-way. Evidently she had been waiting some little time, for otherwise she would merely have backed her maintop-sail.

A couple of sailors soon bundled the baggage into the boat, and one of them, touching his cap, said to Caverton: “Now, sir.”

“By Jove, Caverton,” said I, “here is your sword. I had forgotten it during the evening;” and unbuckling the belt, I handed it to him.

“No,” said he, pushing it toward me, “keep it, Hilton. ’T will remind you of me until I see you again.”

In Buff and Blue

"And that will be —" said I.

"When this cruel war is over," said he, laughing; "and you and Kitty have an establishment of your own."

"Please God it be soon then," I replied as I gave his hand a cordial grip.

"All aboard, Ned," Caverton called out cheerfully as he said good-bye to Mr. Weston. But Dwining was saying farewell to Kitty. I did not intentionally listen, but I could not help hearing a few words.

"Well," said he, and for just a second his voice trembled, "good-bye, Miss Kitty, since it must be that. I thought once, like a fool in his folly, that it might be otherwise, but —"

"Ah, Captain Dwining," said she, softly, "please say no more. Why should you ever have — Why in the world don't you go and fall in love with some lovely girl who cares for you, and there must be plenty of them, or —"

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," said he, cynically. "No, Miss Kitty, I have had my chance and played my cards badly I admit, and very nearly cheated in the play; but — Farewell," he broke in abruptly. "As the old Romans used to say, 'Greeting and farewell,' and may God ever bless you and have you in His

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keeping!" and raising her hand to his lips, he bowed and turned to me.

"Captain Hilton," said he, as he grasped my hand, "I have not much to say except farewell, for what I would like to say, I do not care to speak nor would you hear. Men do not talk of such things. Though I have known you as an enemy, I leave you, I trust, a friend, and had I a son I should wish him to become as gallant a soldier, as courteous a gentleman, and — and — and as forgiving an enemy;" and he turned on his heel and stepped into the boat. One of the men pushed off, and in a few moments we heard them hook on the falls and then the tramp of the men's feet on the decks as they swung the boat in-board. Then came the long rattle of the chain-sheets through the blocks and the slatting of the cloths as the topsails came heavily home; and the not unmusical clank, clank of the windlass pawls as the anchor was hove short. Her helm was put up, away went her head down stream, and slowly gathering way she heeled before the breeze, every rope and back-stay vibrating like a harpstring to the master-touch of the increasing wind.

A faint "farewell" floated to us from across the water; and standing for a moment we watched the long, yellow lines of trembling radiance glancing

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from her open cabin ports upon the water, boiling and bubbling in her wake astern. And then, with a little tremulous sigh, my sweetheart slipped her hand within my arm and nestled contentedly by me for a little space. And presently we followed her father to the house, to take up another thread of a newer, happier life.

But it is now long since those threads have been spun into a rope, stronger than mortal hands can spin, by far too strong to break, to be severed only at the last great Muster.

One scene more and I am through. Cowpens, Guilford Court House, Eutaw Springs,—all rise before my eyes as one sees the sunset through a smoke-wreath, dimly, yet each lending a ray of additional glory to the name of our State line. But it was Camden, that grim, terrible fight in the darkness of the early dawn, that was the worst of all.

After his failure before Savannah, General Clinton, cautiously and carefully but with great judgment, advanced on Charleston, which General Lincoln held with five thousand men. After a brave resistance the defenders capitulated. This I learned later, for on the receipt of news from the seat of war, our regiment, five hundred strong, together with Smallwood's troops, was hurried

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southward, southward ever, to help strike a decisive blow. Lack of food and clothing delayed us so greatly that not until late in July did we cross the Cape Fear river, where General Gates took over the command from General Baron de Kalb, a most gallant officer, and one loved by the men. After crossing the South Carolina border, we were joined by Porterfield, Rutherford, and Armand, increasing our force to four thousand men, but one fourth of whom were regulars. Now, Cornwallis, who had been left in charge by Clinton, had been making himself hated by the people by compelling them to take the oath of allegiance, and as a consequence was forced to patrol the country carefully. When he learned that Gates had taken position at Clermont, Cornwallis decided to surprise him. From this point I can only tell what I saw.

We were camped about Clermont on the night of the 15th of August, wondering what the result of the campaign would be. Together with many of the officers, I was seated before Baron de Kalb's quarters, smoking and talking, when a staff officer rode up with a note, which he handed to him. "Ach! so," said he, grimly, after reading it. "Gentlemen!" turning to the little group, "you will at once join your commands. We move at moonrise."

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"Move, sir? Shall we get under arms?" asked Wilson.

"Yes, sir; keep your men under arms until further orders. — Now, sir," said he, turning to the adjutant, and they went into General de Kalb's quarters.

We moved at moonrise, a little after midnight. It was an uncanny feeling as we pushed forward, a spectral column in the gray mist rising from the swamp, with never a sound to break the silence of the night save the melancholy cry of a whip-poor-will from a distant hillside.

We were advancing at a leisurely gait, Armand's men ahead of us, when there came a crackle of musketry-fire from the front, a shrill yell, and then more shots, followed by the crashing roar of the volley-firing announcing the presence of the British regulars.

"Halt! Halt! For God's sake, Hilton, ride ahead and see what's the matter!" shouted Major Patten, with an oath, reining up alongside me.

I took his horse and galloped forward, where I found all in confusion. Rutherford's men were scattered among the trees along the road, keeping up a constant fire at a thick, sulphurous cloud some hundred yards away, where the British infantry had taken position.

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"What is it?" I asked of an officer standing near me.

"Cursed if I know," he replied; "looks like a *bâl poudré*, does n't it? Wonder if they're in any force. — Here, lieutenant," to another officer, "throw your men forward, half-facing westward. There's more of 'em yonder." The men went forward, evidently fearfully, as one sees a child touch a nettle. A heavy fire was opened from the woods, and Armand fell back. I say "fell back;" they came with a rush, and disordered Smallwood's regiment, which was broken by the shock. Porterfield, in his headlong, daring way, together with Armstrong, charged impetuously and held the foe in check. After the surprise of the attack, a council of war was called, and it was decided to give battle at dawn.

"If we could only run like the militia," said Kirkwood to me, "we'd be all right; but they've got the legs of us."

The first ray of sunlight was the signal for the attack, and the heavy, reverberating roar of our artillery echoed and rumbled among the swamps and across the water. Of the battle that morning it is needless to say much: of the advance of Stevens' seven hundred Virginians on the left; how they fired a single volley and then, with a unanimity which, had

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it been displayed in another way, would have won the fight, turned and ran; how the Carolina troops, when ordered to charge with the bayonet, with which they had been supplied only the day before, looked on the weapons with curiosity, then threw them away and ran for dear life. That little trick of trusting to militia cost us dearly that day.

Gist's Maryland regiment was brigaded with ours on the right, De Kalb commanding; Caswell and his North Carolinians held the centre; Smallwood was in reserve, and our guns were posted in front, on the slope of the hill. When Stevens' men retreated in disorder, our brigade was thrown forward hurriedly to receive the brunt of the attack. I was standing near De Kalb when the men gave way, and I am afraid I must have cursed aloud, for he turned to me, saying gravely, "That does no good, captain. Ah look! Damn them! See them run!" and he struck his spurred heel angrily into the earth. "We must charge them, major," said he, presently. I looked at Kirkwood, who shrugged his shoulders in a suggestive manner and whistled between his teeth, "Jerusalem, My Happy Home," till we both burst into a nervous laugh. Then the order came for us to charge, and I could not repress a little tremor of delight as

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I saw our men, with the steadiness born only of confidence and discipline, swing into line,—a line that quivered and rippled with intense vitality, from flank to flank. Kirkwood, to my left, was muttering to himself, and Forsythe was cursing at the top of his voice—he always did in action; then, as we went at quick step down the hill, their guns opened on us with grape and canister. There is nothing so demoralizing as grape. You see a flash and hear a roar, followed by a sickening splash, just such a noise as a flock of ducks makes on leaving the water; and then the men go down in waves and ripples all about you, and you know nothing more until some one tells you you have won or are defeated. That was exactly what that attack was. We charged them three times, and were simply cut to pieces. The Maryland troops supported us gallantly, but no mortal men could withstand the weight of the attack. De Kalb, Buysson, Stevens, Gates, indeed, all the officers, strove to the utmost, but they simply could not stand the fire. God! How we prayed for those cowardly militia to return! But it was all over; De Kalb, with eleven wounds, died in Buysson's arms, saying, "It is a pleasure to have led such men."

What the next morning was, can be imagined

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from this: Kirkwood, a captain, was commanding officer, and in the swaying, tottering line, sick, faint, and wounded, one hundred and eighty-eight men were mustered where before we were five hundred and eighty. Was it any wonder that as we looked along that line of pale, set faces and weak and wounded men, we should swear to ourselves never to desert such followers? Two companies were all that were left, — left to fight through the rest of that long Southern campaign and to win additional laurels in Virginia.

Of the subsequent part played by the Delaware line, throughout the rest of the war, I need only say that they bore out their previous reputation as good soldiers, and after Yorktown were disbanded, a little group sixty-four strong, of whom it was said: "They were the crack troops of the army." Could we get a better name?

And often now the memory of those days comes back to me, — those dear old days, when all was youth and love and the gratifying sense of duty done, and perfect rest is the reward of duty done. Days when I fought shoulder to shoulder with Haslet and Patterson, Hobart and Stickney, not for money, nor for honor, nor for the gratification of merely personal desires; but simply for our right, our blood-right, won upon a score of fields, — the

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right to live and think and die free men, and dying to leave that right unto our children and our children's children. As Shakespeare says : —

“ Bequeathing it as a rich legacy unto their issue.”

And when these thoughts come to me, I go down upon the beach above the water, to get a whiff of God's own breath, the sea-breeze, that comes whirling in from sea, ripping the blue water into seething foam, and bearing with it that damp, heavy smell of salt, so dear to us all, bred here by the river.

And now when I look back upon those six long years of bloody civil war, of pain, privation, sickness, peril, and awful untold suffering, the birth-pains of a great nation, I thank God that I have played my part, not unworthily I trust; and I can put my hand upon my heart and say: “We did our best.” And we did it, not by reason of our wealth nor strength nor prowess, nor even because of the righteousness of our cause; but, as I like to think, and as the motto reads, on that dingy and battered 'old sword-hilt lying now before me: “*In Potestate Dei et Nostrum*,” which being interpreted means: “By God's strength and our own.”



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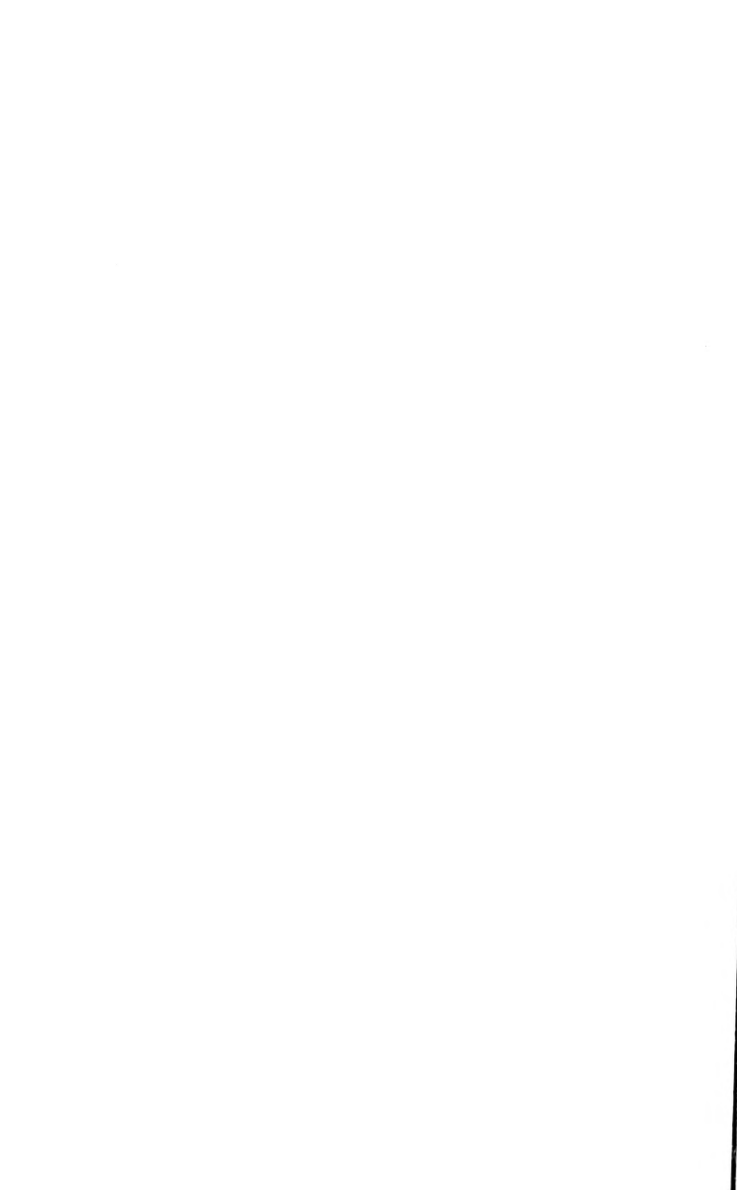
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